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# More Notes from Underledge

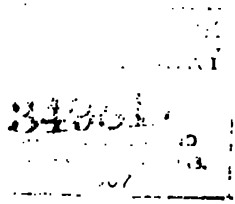
# MORE NOTES FROM UNDERLEDGE

# More Notes from Underledge

By William Potts

Author of
"From a New England Hillside"

New York
Dodd, Mead & Company
1904



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*Published September, 1904*

*To the memory of*

SARAH PORTER

*"the lady of the manor," in grateful recognition of unbounded neighborly kindness and good-fellowship.*

## NOTE

SOME of the papers in this volume have heretofore appeared in periodicals, and the thanks of the author are due to the editors of the *Farmington Magazine*, the New York *Times*, the *Outlook*, the Hartford *Post*, *Lippincott's Magazine*, *Our Animal Friends*, and the *Chap Book* for permission to republish them here. All these, however, have been subjected to careful revision since their original appearance, with consequent changes, in some instances changes of considerable importance.

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# MORE NOTES FROM UNDERLEDGE

meal, because only so could serious injury to the beech be prevented, and I hope that the latter will profit by the relief. I have planted some others, but ill fortune has attended them, and even though a better day should dawn, I cannot expect ever to sit under their drooping branches.

The other trees in that portion of the wood which dominates Underledge are in great variety, chestnut, oak, and ash predominating, and of all sizes and ages up to about fifty or sixty years. There are no very large trees, but a number of fair size, intermingled with seedlings and saplings, and in some places shrubs of smaller growth, especially the wych hazel and the prickly ash, both of which are numerous. All these maintain themselves under somewhat adverse circumstances, growing as they do between the broken fragments which form the talus of the trap ledge which here represents the chalk cliff at Selborne. The pigeon berry and the hepatica clothe the surface wherever they find enough earth to support them. Growing in the soil on the top of the ledge, there are a few moderate-sized silver pines and hemlocks, at the foot of which I have planted the trailing arbutus with some promise of its survival, and beyond, there is a ragged pasture somewhat overgrown with small cedars, sumachs, and white birches, and carpeted with cinquefoil, buttercups, wild

strawberries, and a little grass, excepting where the rocky framework protrudes, as it does in many places. The top of the hill is but a short distance beyond the ledge, and it is not much higher.

At the southwestern end of my part of the ledge, near Sunset Rock, the trees are smaller, and there is a ragged bit that I am very fond of; mostly small cedars, very dilapidated, moss-grown and old for their years, and much wound about and entangled with bittersweet. Here we reach a narrow break, through which the highway winds, and beyond there stands a noble grove of old oaks and hemlocks, which is a joy forever.

From the bottom of the ledge, which does not here rise more than about four hundred feet above the sea, the ground slopes rapidly to the valley, which, between this point and the foot of the western hills, is two or three miles in width, pretty nearly level, and liable to frequent overflow, on which occasions we have a pleasant variety of lake scenery. The general trend of the valley is from north to south, and with little doubt our river at one time ran through it to the Sound, in similar fashion to most of the other rivers in the State. By some cause, probably the gradual though very moderate elevation of the ground to the south of us, its course was turned at this point, after it had fought its way hither from the

northwest; and forming a horseshoe, and flowing to the northward for about ten miles, it found or made a gap through the hills and so passed out southeastwardly into the Connecticut at Windsor.

The bed of the river here is only about one hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea. The river is perhaps a hundred and fifty feet in width, but so closely bordered by trees that the surface of the water rarely shows from a distance, excepting here and there when the trees are bare. The hills beyond the valley rise in steep rounded slopes, and can be seen, tier beyond tier, for many miles, especially in the north-northwest, the most distant points visible in that direction being perhaps fourteen hundred feet in height, but the horizon line is not far from a horizontal one—which certainly befits such a line.

The hill which is capped by the ledge is known in the old records as the "First Mountain." It breaks away towards the eastward, not far from the cottage, in the direction of a copious fountain known as "Paul Spring," which from time to time becomes the center of a tradition that it is unfailing, until an unusually dry season breaks in upon it and damages its reputation for the time being. Here begins the "Second Mountain," or North Mountain, or Talcott Mountain, which by various leaps and bounds climbs

away to the northward, a noble mass, with some fine cliffs and grand headlands, upon which the lingering afternoon sunlight delights to practice all its finest tinting. This range in its greatest height does not exceed about nine hundred feet, but is so near us, and the western face is in some parts so steep, that the effect is of a much more considerable height.

Back of the ledge, to the southwest, is an artificial pond of moderate size, and much beauty, used as a reservoir, and beyond that is a steep summit known as "Rattlesnake Mountain," crowned with huge masses of rock tossed about in wild confusion. It is said that the crotalus still makes himself at home upon this mountain. As to this I cannot say, but I can safely certify as to the copperhead.

The slope upon this side of the valley is covered with a soil made largely from a disintegrated sandstone, and some of it is very productive when kindly treated. The bed of the valley itself is alluvial, and in some places quite rich, though the soil is rather "sour." Here and there are great hills of drift, mostly gravel, some of which are popularly supposed to have been constructed by the Indians, but all are doubtless chargeable to glacial agency. The valley (which stretches far to the northward, to be bounded at last, some thirty miles away, by a group of mountains in the old Bay

State) is, as are the hills, much covered with timber, mostly of moderate size. The largest and most impressive trees, excepting a few great elms, are the buttonwoods, which in the low grounds have sometimes attained imposing dimensions. The cultivated and the cleared land is in larger proportion, however, than appears from any elevated point, since, in perspective, a small piece of woodland naturally conceals a considerable space of bare ground.

The village lies near the foot of the western slope of the First Mountain, the "Main" Street, which has a few angles, but the general course of which corresponds nearly with that of the valley, being built upon at more or less close intervals on both sides, for something over a mile. There are also a "High" Street, and a "River" Street, upon each of which there are some houses, and there are a few cross-streets, upon which, however, with two exceptions, there are few buildings.

The aspect of the village is that of one which was not made, but *grew*. Most of the houses are nowhere in particular, and uniformity "isn't in it." The elm is our most characteristic tree, but the maples are nearly or quite as numerous as the elms, and lest these two should gain the impression that they are the only trees of importance, others in

considerable variety are to be found, breaking in upon any attempt at monotony.

White speaks of the Norton farmhouse, as being to the northwestward of the village of Selborne. The Norton farmhouse we have also, but it is to the northeastward of our village. By the way, White tells of a "broad leaved elm, or wych hazel," which stood in the court of the Norton farmhouse, the trunk of which was eight feet in diameter. This suggests the caution with which we are compelled to handle popular names, the term wych hazel being confined, with us, to the extremely crabbed and angular shrub, the *Hamamelis Virginiana,* which brings its golden blossoms to brighten the dying year.

But what have we here after all that I have written? Merely the bones, the skeleton as it were—living it may be, but waiting to be clothed with leaf and flower and fruit, with lichen and moss and bracken, waiting to palpitate under the sunlight, and to lie pale and wan under the waning moon: waiting for the dash of the warm summer rain: waiting to be breathed upon, and to respond to the touch of the life-giving winds. This is our Tunxis, the village of our hearts' desire.

## II

## AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

WHY did the good people who wandered from Wethersfield and Hartford thus far into the wilderness in 1640, or their superiors in the General Court, think it necessary five years later to give the town the name of Farmington? It is a brave name, it is true, and descriptive, for this was a settlement of farmers; but it is imported and commonplace, and stands in the stead of one even more descriptive, and quite distinctive, and withal aboriginal. They were, these stanch pioneers, not averse to homely and descriptive names in the language with which they were most familiar, as witness "The Great Swamp," and "Lovelytown," and the "Barn-door Hills," and "Bird's Hill," and "Gin-still Hill," and "Whortleberry Hill," and "Satan's Kingdom," and "Pine Meadow," and the like. Perhaps they felt a certain shrinking from terms which smacked too strongly of their neighbors upon the river bank, however amicably they consorted with them for the

most part, and thought, moreover, that it was not fitting that self-respecting Christians should take to themselves a name by which the people of Suncquasson designated their primitive village.

Yet some of us even now look back regretfully upon the old name, and would gladly again accept it, or the more important portion of it, even after the memories of two hundred and fifty years have incrusted that to which we are at present most accustomed. Perhaps, then, we should get our letters directly, instead of having them sent first to Torrington. At all events, we should live in neither a "ton" nor a "ville," and that would be something; and we try to keep the name alive by using it as occasion offers. And we keep fast hold of the name of the Pequabuck, the littler river which glides into the "little" river, the Tunxis, at its bend, by which stream the Indians dropped down in their canoes to catch salmon in the larger one in those golden days when salmon freely frequented these waters, ere yet mills poured their dyestuffs into them, and towns and villages their offscourings of all sorts.

With what singular rapidity the early settlers spread over this eastern country! It seems almost as if they were operated upon by some repulsive force acting among their atoms; for no sooner had they fairly deter-

mined upon a spot upon which to place their hive, than out went a swarm to find and appropriate another nesting place. It was but in 1620, in the wild December weather, that the Pilgrims groped their way into Plymouth harbor; in 1628 that Salem was invaded by the Puritans under Endicott. But already in three years after the latter date a garland of settlements surrounded Tri-mountain; Salem and Newe-Towne and Watertown and Charlestowne and Rocksbury and Dorchester and a number of others. In 1633, at the instigation of Governor Winslow of Plymouth, William Holmes had set up his trading-post at the point where the Tunxis empties into the Connecticut—at Matianuck, the beginning of the new Dorchester, now Windsor; albeit it did not become Dorchester until the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay had elbowed the Pilgrims out of it. The next year at the Indian village of Pyquag began the settlement of Watertown, soon to become Wethersfield and a year later Suckiaug became Newe-Towne, and so remained until Hartford superseded it.

In 1634 that courtly gentleman, John Winthrop the younger, representing Lord Say and Sele, Lord Brooke, John Hampden, John Pym, Sir Richard Saltonstall and their associates, had planted himself at Saybrook, and in 1636 William Pyncheon, following, or making, the Bay path to the bank of the Con-

necticut River, had formed a settlement, which was to be restricted to forty families, at Agawam, which is Springfield.

The Bay settlements proper began in 1628, and already in 1636 Roger Williams had been compelled to move on to Sekonk and Providence. In 1637 Theophilus Eaton came to Quinnipiac to spy out the land, and the following year, with Davenport and the rest of their company, drove the stakes upon which were to be established the hard lines which should hold sound in the faith and in morals the worthy inhabitants of New-Haven but which, alas! should prove so ineffective with the unworthy ones.

Then came, in 1639, the settlement of Wepowaug, alias Milford, and of Menunkatuck, alias Guilford, and of Unquowa, alias Fairfield, and Cupheag, alias Stratford, and so on and so on.

The first suggestion toward a settlement in Connecticut seems to be referred to in the following extract from John Winthrop's journal, April 4, 1631:

"Wahginnacut, a sachem of the River Quonehtacut, which lies west of Naragancet, came to the Governour at Boston, with John Sagamore and Jack Straw, (an Indian who had lived in England and had served Sir Walter Raleigh and was now turned Indian again,) and divers of their Sannops, and

brought a letter to the Governour from Mr. Endecott to this effect: That the said Wahginnacut was very desirous to have some Englishmen to come plant in his country, and offered to find them corn, and give them yearly eighty skins of beaver, and that the country was very fruitful, &c., and wished that there might be two men sent with him to see the country. The Governour entertained them at dinner, but would send none with him."

This was in 1631. We have seen how soon the situation was changed, and how rapidly the lines ran out southward and westward. Thus, within twenty years from that bleak December day when

> "The breaking waves dashed high
> On a stern and rock-bound coast,
> And the woods against a stormy sky
> Their giant branches tossed,"

there had grown up a fringe of settlements from the Penobscot to Manhattan Island, and some others only to be reached by long journeys upon inland waters, or by the paths made by the Indians through the forests and over the mountains. Perhaps it was with them as it was with Daniel Boone—that their foremost desire was for elbow-room.

If so, they certainly found it, but they paid dearly for it. They were not all people of

cultivation and refinement, but a good proportion—I may even say a large proportion—of them appear to have been such, and to have been accustomed to such comforts as were attainable by families of first-rate standing and position in the old country. Realizing this, we can form some idea of the trials through which they passed in those early years.

Think, for example, of that first winter in Newe-Towne, the recent Suckiaug, in 1635-36, when the Charter Oak was young. The largest party for the year did not leave the "Bay" until mid-October, and their journey was long. They reached their destination wholly unprepared for winter, and that year the river was quite frozen over by the middle of November. Shelter was insufficient, and provisions became very scarce. Their supplies, which had been sent by sea, failed to reach them. Many, disheartened, made their way down to the mouth of the river, where they found a small vessel fast in the ice; this they were able to extricate, and in it, after a rough and dangerous voyage, they succeeded in returning to Boston, whither others struggled through the snow-encumbered forest. Those who remained had a sorry time of it; but they endured. A terrible pestilence of smallpox had just swept through the Indian villages, but the whites did not suffer from it.

A different experience attended the larger

party which, under the lead of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, moved the Newe-Towne (Cambridge) Church—the society, not the building—to the newer Newe-Towne in the following year, when a party of a hundred men, women, and children, with Mrs. Hooker carried in a litter, and with their flocks and their herds, journeying like the Israelites of old, took their way through the fresh June woods, and after two weeks' travel reached their new home in the very glory of the early summer.

Thomas Hooker was easily the commanding spirit of the movement and of the new colony of the Connecticut, consisting of the three settlements of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield. Whatever other reasons may have existed for this migration, it is clear that the oligarchical spirit of the Bay Settlements was utterly foreign and intolerable to him. To him probably more than to any other single individual is to be traced the form of democratic government adopted in the United States. He was evidently of a mind with Sir Richard Saltonstall, who, after his return to England from the first Watertown in 1631, wrote to the ministers of Boston: "It doth not a little grieve my spirit to hear what sadd things are reported of your tyranny and persecutions in New-England, and that you fyne, whip, and imprison men for their con-

sciences. . . . These rigid ways have laid you very low in the hearts of the saynts. We pray for you and wish you prosperitie every way, and not to practice these courses in the wilderness which you went so far to prevent. I hope you do not assume to yourselves infallibilitie of judgment, when the most learned of the apostles confessed he knew but in part and saw but darkly as through a glass."

In a sermon preached in 1638, the year before the adoption of the first Connecticut Constitution, Mr. Hooker laid down three leading doctrines, upon which that Constitution was subsequently based:

"I. That the choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people, by God's own allowance.

"II. The privilege of election, which belongs to the people, therefore must not be exercised according to their humours, but according to the blessed will and law of God.

"III. They who have power to appoint officers and magistrates, it is in their power also to set the bounds and limitations of the power and place unto which they call them."

While the form of government established and the government conducted by the Connecticut colony upon these principles were in lively contrast with those established by the Puritans in Boston and in New-Haven, there was no lack of deference and respect to those

upon it. In front lie broad meadow-lands, stretching far to the southward, through which the Pequabuck twists and turns, to lose itself at length in the Tunxis, which, coming through rocky gorges from the hills of Barkhamsted in the northwest, emerges upon the plain and turns to the northward, where it meets its younger sister and then bathes the foot of the Talcott Mountain for fifteen or sixteen miles before it finds an opportunity to slip through and run southeastward to its union with the Connecticut. Within the horseshoe are other meadows, annually overflowed more or less in the early spring, as are also those to the southward; and then come gentle hills and an undulating country which the eye follows up to the Massachusetts border, to be checked at last by the mountains of Montgomery.

And though, with all our fondness for this valley and for these hills, we are unable—perhaps from custom—quite to realize the "almost Alpine grandeur" which a recent inspired critic found in our picturesque trap ledges and wooded slopes, we are glad to recognize in his rhapsody the proof of the inspiration which they afford, and to feel in consequence more than justified in our less spasmodic enjoyment of them.

## III

## FARMINGTON (CONNECTICUT) EIGHTY YEARS AGO

[Written in 1895]

I HAVE among my kinsfolk one whose powers of memory are my constant envy, for she occasionally astonishes her friends by recalling with great vividness occurrences of interest, of which the most marked characteristic perhaps is the fact (quite as singular to her, when discovered, as to others) that the events spoken of took place some forty or fifty years before she was born. So much for the value of a lively imagination and power of assimilation. Not being gifted in like manner, I have had to rely upon the recollections of others, and upon the material which I found accessible, some of it in print and some in manuscript, which I have unhesitatingly laid under contribution whenever I could make it serviceable. I am especially indebted to Julius Gay, the admirable chronicler of his native village.

It is said that all roads lead to Rome, the

center of the Christian world. By many, Boston has long been considered the center of the Universe. Farmington could not fairly be called upon to rival these two nuclei; nevertheless, much investigation has led me to the conclusion that it has been in its day a close third. Planted at the end of the Pilgrim's Path, traces of which may yet be discovered upon yonder hill, it later became an important station upon the highway between the cities of New York and Boston, with thoroughfares leading northwestward to Pittsfield and Albany, and southward to New Haven. It seems to have been always a center from which formative influences streamed out over the length and breadth of the land. If it be true that such centers are strown broadcast all over the country, we can only say, by way of paraphrase, blessed is the land whose center is everywhere, whose circumference is nowhere.

There are very serious difficulties connected with the effort to give a picture of circumstances and customs at any specific time long past. If there be survivors, their memories of the conditions at various dates inevitably run together and become confused: books regarding former times are apt to be unreliable for the same reason, or because their authors fail to indicate dates in stating peculiarities of dress, manner, habit, or condition; and con-

temporary records usually omit precisely the items upon which one desires information. One must be very careful in handling authorities, especially printed authorities, which purport to be of the latter class. A notable instance attracted my attention while looking up the facts which I am about to record. A magazine article came before me, which purported to give extracts from a journal kept in this village by a young girl during the Revolutionary War—a valuable document, could it have been depended upon. Unfortunately, as I read it over, its whole tone rang false, as something quite impossible under the circumstances. When I came to apply a more careful test I discovered under date of December, 1776, specific record of events which did not actually occur until months later. The young woman to whom this happened was complementary, as it were, to my kinswoman. Her memory might be called the anticipatory, and the other the retroactive.

In thinking of Farmington as it was eighty years ago we are called upon to view a situation differing from the present in an unusual way. Instead of a quiet, budding village, we must realize a bustling and busy center of manufacture and trade. Goods were imported direct from foreign parts—even from the antipodes—in vessels owned in this place; and there are to-day to be found here in

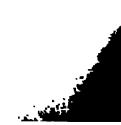
various houses sets of real china, made upon the other side of the globe to order, and having upon them the names of those who ordered them, which were brought over in these vessels. This is the more singular, since our rivers were never navigable for any vessel very much more serious than a canoe, but little matters of this kind did not trouble our ancestors: if they wanted an inland seaport, they would have it. An interesting example of their indifference to ordinary considerations came to my notice two or three years ago in the northwestern part of this State. In the course of my wanderings I came across the ruins of an old mill and machinery at the outlet of a pond on the top of Mount Riga, some eighteen hundred or two thousand feet above the level of the sea. Upon inquiring into the history of the place I discovered that the pond was known as Forge Pond, and that formerly, in the active days of the iron industry, iron in ore or in pigs (let us hope at least that it was the latter) was hauled up the mountain in wagons from Oreville, some miles distant, to be worked in this old mill, the finished material being subsequently carried down for distribution. To most persons now it would seem more expedient to catch and use the water power at the foot of the mountain, rather than at its summit.

But to return to Farmington. Goods of

various kinds were here manufactured in numerous buildings,—checked and striped linens, leather, hats, potash, muskets, tinware, and various other articles,—and were distributed from this point throughout the country. I will not pretend to try to explain the relation between the facts that at the time these manufactures became profitable the country was under a low tariff, and that immediately after the war of 1812-15 which cut off foreign importations, and under the higher tariff which followed it, this whole structure went to pieces. This is as inscrutable as the fact that under the disastrous Wilson tariff, the number of persons employed in the manufactories of Connecticut increased by thirteen or fourteen per cent., instead of going exactly the other way, as everybody knows that it should. These are but samples, however, of the fashion in which facts will fly in the face of well-known philosophical principles, to the great and increasing perplexity of worthy people who have arranged all these things in advance precisely as they should be. Facts are like mosquitoes: they don't amount to much, but sometimes they are very annoying.

There are a number of buildings of the eighteenth century now standing; but of these doubtless many may have been transplanted from their original positions, though so long ago that it seems to-day as if they had taken





root in the places where we find them. This is notably the case with a number of gambrel-roofed houses upon the side streets, which are now occupied as dwellings, but which were formerly stores or parts of stores upon Main Street. Buildings, not a few, have disappeared and left no trace. If we may trust a map or plan drawn many years ago by the Rev. William S. Porter, one such stood upon the front of my mountain meadow, but of this not a sign remains unless I may consider as such an apple tree and a cherry tree, both of humble quality, along the roadside. The ordinary monument, the purple lilac, is wholly missing. This locomotive tendency upon the part of buildings is, I suppose, a Yankee peculiarity, and in keeping with the restless habit of the inhabitants. It is an unending wonder to me that the majority of our people are always wishing to be somewhere else. I am sure that I should be quite willing to remain within the grounds at Underledge for the remainder of my days, provided always that such a condition were not made compulsory. But I am very doubtful whether I ever met another who could say so much of any place. With the majority, perpetual motion seems to be the essential condition of continued life.

A number of the more important buildings now standing were erected within the first

twenty years of this century, the period of the greatest financial prosperity of the village. Of the older buildings which remain, and of which the date of erection is approximately known, the most ancient is the Whitman house on High Street, directly in front of Underledge. This is the only one now standing of three supposed to have been erected about the year 1700. The second and third both stood upon the same side of the same street until modern times, one of them having been torn down in 1880 to make room for a barn which could better have been spared; the other, after removal to the rear of the lot upon which it formerly stood, in which new location it became, I am told, a disgrace in its old age, was burned in 1886.

Others of the eighteenth century (beginning by the approach on the Hartford road) include a house on the corner of North Main Street, now occupied as a tin shop, and another adjoining, a quaint little dark gambrel-roofed structure wherein the Tunxis Library was started a number of years ago. I would that I could have seen it in those days, for though the present library room in the village hall is commodious and attractive, it certainly lacks the special charm which, I am told, always characterized its former abode. A short distance below, on the other side of the street, is a pleasant-looking cottage, the

lowness of which gives an additional accent to the great size of the patriarchal elm which overshadows it. Nearly opposite is the Elm Tree Inn, a well-known and comfortable hostelry of various dates of construction, the original portion (probably the brick part of the front and a hospitable room behind it, with a great fireplace in which hangs the old crane) being very old.

Opposite the north end of the Main Street is a large mansion, built about a hundred and thirty years ago by Colonel Fisher Gay, who led the farmers of Farmington to the Revolutionary War, wherein he performed good but brief service, for he gave up his life early. This building has recently been moved back from the road and largely reconstructed with exceedingly good taste, and the numerous unsightly barns which had been crowded about it having been removed, it now commands the attention which it deserves, and at the same time permits of a good view to the northward on the part of those coming up the street.

Upon Main Street itself, probably at least one-third of the buildings now standing, and perhaps a larger proportion, belong to the eighteenth century. Some of these have been considerably altered, and others probably remain very much as when erected. One of these, a fine old mansion, is said to have been designed by an officer of Burgoyne's army,

then sojourning here as a prisoner of war. Another, built for a tavern immediately after the Revolution by one of the Wadsworth family, and still belonging to a member of that family, was formerly the scene of many merrymakings, and it was at one time under contemplation to hold the sessions of the Legislature in it, the Hartford innkeepers having failed to satisfy the members of that body.

The house of Colonel Noadiah Hooker, a descendant of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, the first minister of the church at Hartford, and grandfather of John Hooker, now of that city, and great-grandfather of "Professor" William Gillette, stood on the New Britain road about a hundred and fifty yards from the Main Street, on or near the spot now occupied by a small schoolhouse, which was the original home of the well-known Farmington Seminary for Young Ladies. Edward, the son of Noadiah, used the old dwelling house as a schoolhouse and dormitory, and it was known then and afterward as the "old red college." His son Edward writes (I quote from Julius Gay) that the "kitchen was floored with smooth flat mountain stones, and had a big door at the eastern end, and my father used to say that when his father was a boy, they used to drive a yoke of oxen with a sled load of wood into one door and up to the

fireplace, then unload the wood upon the fire, and drive the team out of the other door."

In looking over some old family records while preparing this account, I was interested to find it stated regarding a strong stone house erected in Pennsylvania in 1752 or 1753, by my great grandfather, and still standing and occupied by "The Hill School," "There was formerly a large doorway in the back part of the house, into which it was customary to drive a cart loaded with wood to supply the kitchen fire."

The erection of the present church building was begun in 1771, nearly one hundred and twenty-five years ago, and I have been told that most of the shingles upon its beautiful spire are those originally placed upon it at the time of its completion in the following year. It was fitted with high square pews, of which those in the gallery were removed in the winter of 1825, and those in the body of the house in 1836. The paneling of these was scattered, a portion of it being worked into the horsesheds in the rear of the church, where it can still be descried. The pulpit seems to have been a formidable affair with a window behind it, an extinguisher over it, and a mysterious door beneath. At an anniversary celebration a good many years ago, John Hooker spoke of the great curtains behind the pulpit, and of the huge sounding board. Pro-

fessor Denison Olmsted asked what had become of the old square pews, the old pulpit with all its gorgeous decorations, the carved work that adorned the pilasters at either side of the pulpit windows, with flowers painted of copper green. The pulpit, I believe, was made so high and formidable looking, in part, in order that the minister might be within easy range of the galleries. John Hooker tells a story—at least *ben trovato,* if not *vero*—of the loud preaching from a similar box-like pulpit, which led a little girl who had been taken to church for the first time, to ask her mother on the way home, "Why they didn't let that man out, when he was trying so hard to get out, and hollering so." President Porter spoke of the sounding board as "a wondrous canopy of wood with a roof like the dome of a Turkish mosque"; Hon. Francis Gillette described it as a pear-shaped canopy, with a stem hardly visible. "As nearly as I can recollect," said he, "the conclusion to which I came concerning the design or use of the wooden avalanche, was, that it was an invention, not to help the preacher's voice, which needed no help, but to hang over him *in terrorem*, after the manner of the sword of Damocles, to fall and crush him should he preach any false doctrine."

Of the other peculiarity of the pulpit, President Porter says "there opened a door beneath

the pulpit into a closet, of which it was fabled that it was reserved by the tything man for boys especially unruly in behavior."

That such a myth should have grown up is not to be wondered at. With what seems to us at this day a fatuity almost inconceivable, the boys at that period were not permitted to sit with their elders, but were herded together in the galleries, the effect of which arrangement was just about as bad as it could be. It was to correct this state of things that the square pews were removed from the galleries in 1825.

The pulpit subsequently disappeared, but there is a tradition that it did duty during its latter days as a chicken coop. What became of the crown which formerly graced the summit of the spire appears to be wholly unknown. Were this found, it would be a treasure indeed.

A singular arrangement existed in the management of the church, as of others at that time, of which it is worth while to make mention. It was the custom from time to time to appoint a "Seating Committee." The function of this committee was to indicate the social and religious position of the members of the church, and seat them accordingly. "In 1783," says President Porter, "a large committee was appointed *to dignify the Meeting-house,* that is, to designate and arrange

the seats according to their relation of dignity, and to report. Their report was received at a subsequent meeting, and a Seating Committee was immediately appointed." The last seating took place in 1842. Can you imagine the heartburnings which must sometimes have arisen from the decisions of such a committee, settling definitely and without effective appeal the rank of the members and thus their social standing, outside as well as within the church, as compared with that of their fellows?

It was cold comfort that the good people had within the sanctuary at certain seasons of the year. There was no stove to heat the church until 1824, and such alleviation as was to be had was obtained from foot stoves which the worshipers carried with them. The struggle over the introduction of stoves into the churches was one which did not meet with immediate success. I have not read, I think, a detailed account of the proceedings here, but some circumstances connected with the change in the neighboring town of Litchfield are not without interest. This change took place during the time of the Rev. Lyman Beecher. Deacon Trowbridge had been induced to give up his opposition, but shook his head "as he felt the heat reflected from it, and gathered up the skirts of his greatcoat as he passed" it. The chronicler adds: "But when the editor

of the village paper, Mr. Bunce, came in —who was a believer in stoves in churches— and with a most satisfactory air warmed his hands at the stove, keeping the skirts of his greatcoat carefully between his knees, we could stand it no longer, but dropped invisible behind the breastwork. . . . But the climax of the whole was when Mrs. Peck went out in the middle of the service." It is said that she became ill and fainted from the heat. The fact is that, the day being warm, there was no fire in the stove.

Eccelesiastical privileges were provided generously in those days: those who came in the morning from long distances, as many did, had no time to return to their homes, but were accommodated between services in Sabbath or Saba-day houses, erected upon the green about the church. The music of the church was undergoing a change—in fact, in this and other churches it had been undergoing a change for sixty or eighty years, if indeed the period of change does not still continue, which, from remarks that I occasionally hear, I am led to suspect is the case. When the custom of " lining out " the hymns was given up, I do not know. But other customs which were introduced from time to time in the course of musical evolution had an effect even more singular than the lining out. Mrs. Earle tells of the ridiculous result produced by the

repetition of words in Billings' fugues, which were at one time in use. "Thus the words

> "'With reverence let the Saints appear
> And bow before the Lord,'

were forced to be sung 'And bow-wow-wow, And bow-wow-wow,' and so on until bass, treble, alto, counter, and tenor had 'bow-wowed' for about twenty seconds; yet," she adds, "I doubt if the simple hearts that sang ever saw the absurdity." This case will doubtless remind you of Händel's magnificent oratorio of the Messiah, with its perfectly credible statement of fact frequently reiterated, with a positiveness which seems unnecessary, "All we like sheep."

It is rather strange that anything so harmonious as music should awaken contentions and animosities, but such seem to have been almost constantly arising in the churches, and at times attained an incomprehensible bitterness.

The singing at about 1720 appears to have been both leisurely and cacophonous. Rev. Thomas Walter says, "I myself have twice in one note paused to take breath. . . . I have observed in many places, one man is upon this note, while another is a note before him, which produces something so hideous and disorderly as is beyond expression bad. . . . No two men in the congregation quaver alike, or

together; which sounds in the ears of a good judge, like *five hundred* different tunes roared out at the same time, whose perpetual interferings with one another, perplexed jars and unmeasured periods, would make a man wonder at the false pleasure which they conceive in that which good judges of music and sounds cannot bear to hear."

The following petition will indicate the nature of the controversy, as it affected our village at about this time:

"To the Honourable ye General Assembly at hartford ye 18th of May 1725. the memorial of Joseph Hawley one of ye house of Representatives humbly sheweth your Memorialist his father and Grandfather and ye whole Church & people of farmingtown have used to worship God by singing psalms to his praise In yt mode called ye Old way. however t'other Day Jonathan Smith & one Stanly Got a book & pretended to sing more regularly & so made Great disturbance In ye worship of God for ye people could not follow ye mode of singing. at Length t'was moved to ye church whither to admit ye new way or no, who agreed to suspend it at least for a year. yet Deacon hart ye Chorister one Sabbath day In setting ye psalm attempted to sing Bella tune—and yor memorialist being used to ye old way as aforesd did not know *bellum* tune from *pax* tune, and supposed ye deacon

had aimed at Cambridge short tune, and set it wrong, whereupon yr petitioner Raised his Voice in ye sd short tune & ye people followed him, except ye sd Smith & Stanly, & ye few who Sang allowed In bella tune; & so there was an unhappy Discord in ye singing, as there has often bin since ye new Singers set up, and ye Blame was all Imputed to yor poor petition[er], and Jno Hooker, Esqr., assistant, sent for him, & fined him ye 19th of Febry Last for breach of Sabbath, and so yor poor petitionr is layed under a very heavie Scandal & Reproach & Rendered vile & prophane for what he did in ye fear of God & in ye mode he had bin well educated in and was then ye setled manner of Singing by ye agreemt of ye Church.

"Now yor Petitionr thinks ye Judgement is erroneous, first, ye fact if as wicked as mr. hooker supposed Comes under ye head of disturbing God's worship, and not ye statute of prophaning ye Sabbath: Secondly, because no member of a Lawfull Church Society can be punished for worshiping God In ye modes & forms, agreed upon, & fixed by ye Society: thirdly because tis errors, when ye Civill authority sodenly Interpose between partyes yt differ about modes of worship, & force one party to Submitt to ye other, till all milder methods have bin used to Convince mens' Consciences: fourthly because tis error to

make a Gent of yor Petitionr Carracter a Scandalous offender upon Record, for nothing but a present mistake at most, when no morral evil is intended.

"Wherefore yor poor petitioner prayes you to set aside ye sd Jud, or by what means your honrs please, to save yor poor petitionr from ye Imputation of ye heinous Crime Laid to him, & yor poor petitionr as In duty &c. shall ever pray.

"JOSEPH HAWLEY."

Billings reformed all that, and this is what he thought as to the success of his fugal music: "It has more than twenty times the power of the old slow tunes; each part straining for mastery and victory, the audience entertained and delighted, their minds surpassingly agitated and extremely fluctuated, sometimes declaring for one part, and sometimes another. Now the solemn bass demands their attention, —next the manly tenor; now, the lofty counter,—now the volatile treble. Now here—now there—now here again. O, ecstatic! Rush on, ye sons of harmony!"

But it was the reformation of Billings which was going on eighty years ago.

A change which took place in the church music upon the formation of the Handel Society in 1818, under the leadership of the unorthodox but universally beloved Dr.

Todd, who led the choir by his violin, must have been most satisfactory. At about the same time the 'cello, the flute, the clarionet, and the bassoon were introduced.

The church building, furnishing as it did the only large room in the village, was used for a great variety of purposes. Elections were held there, and public meetings of all sorts. The various exercises connected with the village academy were conducted in the church, and the academy was not parsimonious as to time allowance. Edward Hooker writes in his journal (the MS. of which Mr. John Hooker has kindly placed at my disposal), under date of Friday, February 24, 1826: "Evening. Attended an exhibition of dramatic pieces, declamations, etc., performed by the scholars of Mr. Hart's Academy at the Meeting-House. A great concourse of people attended. The exercises began about five & continued till half past eleven." A special dispensation must have been obtained upon this occasion, or the rules must have been somewhat relaxed since the earlier days of the century, when, as Mr. Gay reports, "Governor Treadwell fined the society ladies of his day because, as the indictment read, 'They were convened in company with others at the house of Nehemiah Street, and refused to disperse until after nine o'clock at night.'"

Governor Treadwell was not an enthusiast

in favor of the school exhibitions. They were given up about 1800 as calculated, he says, "like hot-beds to force a premature growth for ignorance and folly to stare at." They were resumed in 1823, and President Porter says, "Dramas were more than once enacted in this old puritan edifice with drop curtains and greenroom." He does not add that in 1826, probably on the occasion referred to by Edward Hooker, a then future President of Yale College, bearing the name of Porter, acted the part of a Frenchman in a play called "The Will, or the power of Medicine," and that in the following year "Elijah L. Lewis [still living at the north end of the village] has the part of Philip in the play 'The Curfew,' in which N. Porter Jr. is a robber disguised as a Minstrel."

In the Meeting-house yard, or upon the Green, were the Sabbath-day houses, and the Schoolhouse, and here also, even so late as eighty years ago, were the stocks in which offenders were occasionally placed to be stared and perhaps also jeered at. I fear that the whipping post and the pillory had not departed long before. To make amends for turbulent behavior at other times, it is said that "When the minister or a stranger entered the school-house, its busy inmates rose at once to their feet. As either approached the schoolhouse by the wayside, the School children

ceased from their sports and arranged themselves in ranks to give a pleasant greeting to the passer by."

The Meeting-house yard or green was a gathering place also when the weather did not forbid, and a place for athletic sports; and military companies marched and countermarched there. "The consummation of the military glory of the village was reached when it could boast a Major General whose staff was largely made up from its wealthy young men. The distinguished white horse which the General rode contributed not a little to the glory of the General and his staff. However sober and prosaic this horse might seem during most of the months of several of his last years, he never failed to grow young and gay as the autumnal reviews required his services." That the mixture might be complete, President Porter adds that punch and toddy were "brewed on the steps and at the door of the sanctuary," and freely distributed. Perhaps there is no subject upon which there is more misrepresentation to-day by those who are accounted good people, than that of the use and the abuse of intoxicating drinks. If you listen to an enthusiast upon this matter, you might be led to believe that the custom is constantly growing from bad to worse. Nothing could be more absolutely false. On the contrary, were you suddenly to be placed

in this village upon a holiday as it was at the period of which I am speaking, you would feel as if you had been transferred to the realm of Bacchus and Silenus. Egbert Cowles speaks euphemistically of the imports being largely of the " products of the sugar house," meaning in a measure sugar and molasses, but more particularly rum. It seemed impossible at any time in the eighteenth century to erect a church without an adequate allowance of rum, and the custom took long in dying. Alice Morse Earle says, " In Northampton, in 1738, ten gallons of rum were bought for £8 ' to raise the Meeting house '—and the village doctor got £3 for ' setting his bone Jonathan Strong,' and £3. 10s. for ' setting Ebenezer Burt's thy,' which somehow through the rum or the raising both gotten broken." " Rev. Nathan Strong, pastor of the first Church of Hartford, and author of the hymn ' Swell the Anthem, raise the song,' was engaged in the distilling business, and did not make a success of it either."

In this village a ten-gallon keg, or a thirty-gallon cask of rum was not an unusual supply to sustain the labors of the harvest field. Liquors were kept in the stores as a matter of course, and they seem to have been freely served upon all occasions. The immediate consequences may readily be imagined, and the desolation which followed.

As in all the experiences of life, a little humor crops out now and then to make things bearable. There was one Brownson, or Bronson, who had a mill at the south end of the town. Bronson was a dyer, a spinner, a weaver—in fact, he seems to have been an adept at all sorts of trades. But he occasionally partook of the products of the sugar house, and upon one of these occasions showed his dissent from the attitude of his wife by throwing her into the great dye-kettle, in consequence of which experience she was compelled to absent herself from public gaze for several months. Egbert Cowles says that a schoolgirl wrote, and induced one of the boys to post upon his door, this epitaph:

> "Here lies one, and he was human,
> He lived a man, but dyed a woman."

As you may suppose, there was thereafter war to the knife between the craftsman and his tormentors.

It seems to have been customary both in Connecticut and in Massachusetts to have an installation ball to celebrate the induction of a new pastor. Such a ball was held in Wadsworth's tavern at the time of the installation of Dr. Porter in 1806; the Doctor, however, I believe was not present.

I have spent much time upon the church and its immediate environment, but this is

inevitable, for, formerly at least, the church was the center of the life of every Connecticut village. It was a God-fearing people that settled these towns, but if the truth must be told they appear sometimes to have feared God more than was actually necessary, and occasionally tried to "get square" with him when he was supposed not to be looking.

Though not adjoining the church, as is usually or often the case, the old burying ground seems naturally to follow with its claim for attention. I will only transcribe one of the curious inscriptions which appear upon the stones, though many of them are well worthy of examination. The one to which I refer is the following, which is inscribed upon a stone erected in memory of a citizen of the town who was a Tory during the Revolutionary War: "In Memory of Mr. Mathias Leaming, who hars got beyound the reach of Parcecushion. The life of man is vanity."

Funerals, and they seem to have been startlingly numerous, especially during an epidemic of spotted fever in 1808-9, were usually held on the day following the death. When so many had joined the majority as to demand extended space, the new ground was opened down near the river on the site of an old Indian village and burying ground. There were some of the Tunxis Indians still left at

the time of which I speak, living not far from the site of the present railroad station. They had a burying ground some two hundred yards east of the station, where several commemorative stones are still to be seen. A memorial column was erected in the new ground to the departed race, for which one Lydia Huntley, reared in the Wadsworth family, and who often spent her time with the branch of that family in Farmington, wrote a few stanzas which have been inscribed thereon, beginning:

> "Chieftains of a banished race,
> In your ancient burial place
> By your fathers' ashes blest,
> Here in peace securely rest."

I am compelled to say that her name would hardly be remembered to this day, if Lydia Huntley Sigourney had not done more worthily.

Of the buildings erected during the early years of this century, several were of considerable size, and marked the growing prosperity and social requirements of their owners. They are of various styles of architecture, or of no style, and marked a period of search after variety with more or less fortunate results, according to circumstances. Up to this time I suppose that the various styles of building were in order about as follows: first, the structure of logs, which was part dwelling

and part fort, with or without a stone chimney—in the early days one of a group surrounded by a stockade as a defense against the Indians: then the square frame house, with an enormous chimney stack in the middle, toward which the roof sloped from all the four sides: then the house with two gables, with the great chimney still in the center, with projecting front said to have been designed for defense against attacks by Indians, and long lean-to roof in the rear: then the gambrel-roofed cottage, and more pretentious "old Colonial" mansion, a building of much dignity; and finally, about the first of this century, the more or less classic buildings, with broad and imposing pediments and high columns, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and nondescript. After that the deluge!

The most considerable of these buildings is that which has been occupied for so many years as the principal home of Miss Porter's famous seminary, a building to which many a fond recollection points on the part of mothers and daughters in all quarters of the Union. I doubt whether there is another upon our soil the memory of which is so fondly cherished by so many, for such a reason. One by one a considerable number of the noted residences of old have also been appropriated to the use of this little community, but the school still continued in the great brick building over-

grown with vines, which faces the New Britain road as it descends the hill. This was erected for a hotel in the twenties, a little later than the period of which I am mainly writing, to accommodate the vast traveling public that was to be brought hither by way of the Farmington Canal, but which, alas! never came. It succeeded a frame tavern, parts of which, or of the structures connected with which, still survive in the gymnasium and in the Music Cottage, and that is the only manner in which, as a hotel, it did succeed.

The Canal—the ill-fated canal, about which so many bright anticipations were formed, was opened gayly in 1828. Edward Hooker writes: "Friday, June 20th; very fine weather. A multitude of people collected this afternoon to witness the launching and sailing of the first canal Boat that has been seen at Farmington. Everything was conducted well, Bell ringing, cannon firing, and music from the Phoenix Band. About two hundred gentlemen and ladies, who were previously invited & furnished with tickets, sailed to and over the aqueduct & back again. The boat was drawn at first by four & afterward by three large grey horses, handsomely decked, and rode by as many black boys, dressed in white. Crackers & cheese, lemonade, wine, etc., were furnished to the guests, and the musicians performed very finely on

the passage. The Boat was named James Hillhouse with three cheers while passing the Aqueduct." This was, as I have said, in 1828; in 1848, the Farmington Canal died, not having yet attained its majority—I fear unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

The present aspect of Farmington depends about as much upon its trees as upon its buildings. In this respect we must believe that a momentous change has occurred since the time of which I am writing. The great elm, nearly opposite the Elm Tree Inn, and the tree behind the Inn, with one other which died, were planted in 1762, one hundred and thirty-four years ago. Tradition—I know not how authentic—claims that a large elm, still standing in a yard at the southern end of the town, was planted to commemorate the declaration of peace with Great Britain at the termination of the Revolutionary War. I am forced to question whether there is any other tree now standing within the village which was planted much more than eighty years since. If there be, it must have been extremely young at the period in question. What must we think of in place of those with which we are now familiar? Of the Lombardy poplars, of all trees in the world! There was a row of Lombardy poplars close around the church, and there was a double row along the path to the street; Lombardy

poplars were planted around the green, " they lined the village street and were planted in double rows through the cemetery."

How far these were used throughout the village, it is impossible now to say,—probably only here and there, but fashion is very strong, and we know what a fashion there was at one time for these trees. I have found traces of them here and there, and especially may mention those in the school grounds near the west corner, some now standing along my fence on the ledge near Sunset Rock, and others along the next fence to the eastward. Think what the village must have been as compared with the village of the present, if this were the characteristic tree, even to a moderate extent! It calls to mind the dialogue in our old reading books, wherein the Macedonian says, "Art thou the Thracian robber of whose exploits I have heard so much?" because of the startling nature of the suggested comparison with which it ends: "Alexander to a robber! Let me reflect."

It was in this village in 1810 and in the parlors of Rev. Dr. Porter, that there was organized that body destined to become famous as the A. B. C. F. M.—or the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and Governor Treadwell was its first President. It is not the least important circumstance connected with this organization

that, by a kind or an unkind fate, it within recent years became the scene of a contest between the old and the new theologies, sure to have an important bearing upon the future thought and faith of the world.

What were the life and manners of the time of which I write—of the Farmington of eighty years ago?

It is impossible to make a finished picture; we must be satisfied with a line here and a line there. There must have been something striking in the aspect of the place, at least to the childish eye. Elihu Burritt, once known as "the Learned Blacksmith," said in 1872: "When I made my first journey to Farmington, I stepped off the whole distance (from New Britain, 'ye Great Swamp,' as it was then called) with a pair of legs not much longer than those of a carpenter's compass. . . After the longest walk I had ever made on my small bare feet, we came suddenly upon the view of this glorious valley, and of the largest city I had ever conceived of. I was smitten with wonder. I dared not go any farther, though urged by my older brothers. I clambered up the Sunset Rock and sitting down on the edge with my feet over the side looked off upon the scene with a feeling like that of a man first coming in view of Rome and its St. Peter's. I had never before seen a church with a steeple, and measuring this

above us with a child's eye, it seemed to reach into the very heavens."

The rural surroundings do not appear to have affected all at that time as they do most of us to-day. Edward Hooker says in his journal (January 12, 1809), "Could not avoid being at the windows to gaze at and admire the mountains all around the town, especially the North Mountain near our friend Col. Norton's, about 3 or 4 miles off. I thought the prospect from my father's a charming one. My mother wondered at my curiosity, and said that range of ugly, broken, barren mountains was by no means a grateful object for her sight, but rather the reverse. She could see in it nothing to admire, nothing calculated to attract the attention."

The old life was in many ways a hard one both for men and women, but I imagine that the women had the worst of it. There were few servants excepting menservants, and few of these were engaged in domestic labor. There were some negro slaves, one of whom was emancipated in 1816, as the following document shows: "Whereas, on application made by me, Joshua Youngs, of Farmington in the County of Hartford, to one of the Civil Authority, and two of the Selectmen of said Farmington, they have signed a certificate that 'Titus,' a black man, now or late my slave, is in good health and is not of greater age than

forty-five years, nor less age than twenty-five years, and upon examination of said Titus they are convinced that he is desirous of being made free. Therefore be it known to all whom it may concern, that I have and hereby do completely emancipate and set at liberty the said Titus, so that neither I nor any claiming under me shall hereafter have any right whatever to his services in virtue of his being my slave.

"Done at Farmington this 10th day of January, A. D. 1816,

"JOSHUA YOUNGS,

"In presence of JOHN MIX, SAMUEL COWLS,

"JOHN MIX,

"Register."

There were still slaves in Connecticut in 1840, and in New Jersey there were said to be eighteen slaves remaining in 1860, the year before the War of the Rebellion.

A girl seated at a flax wheel, spinning in the open air when the weather was fine, you may well suppose was a pretty sight, and no young girl need think the portion of her day so spent very hardly employed. She might not be able to sing with Senta the music of the "Flying Dutchman," but she had her own familiar music, and I warrant you she made her account of it. Then there were the weaving and the bleaching and the making of the garments both for themselves and for the men-

folk. The knitting of stockings was never ended. I believe that no young woman was ready to be married until she had a pillowcase-ful of stockings, and could sweep the hearth without moving the andirons. Then there were the washing and the ironing. A great wash boiler hung from a crane in the huge kitchen fireplace for weekly use, and from the same crane by pothooks and trammels hung the various brass or iron vessels which were used in the cooking. The meats were roasted before the fire on a spit, or in a tin or iron Dutch oven, as it was called. Opening from the kitchen was the dome of the great brick oven in which bread and pies were baked. I believe that one still remains, opening from the Reading room of the Elm Tree Inn, and there are doubtless many others in the village. In this oven a great fire was built, and when the bricks had become thoroughly heated the fire was drawn, the oven was swept out, and the articles to be baked were put in place.

Then candles must be dipped or molded, but molding was a late refinement. The dipping was done by tying a number of wicks at intervals along a stick and lowering them repeatedly into the melted tallow, until enough had adhered to give sufficient thickness. The fat not used for candles, and the ashes from the hearth, must be saved and em-

ployed in making the barrels of soft soap, of which a free use was needed to keep the house as sweet and clean as the accomplished housewife required.

There was chinaware for the table, the real thing, as I have said, in some houses, but this was not general, and it was kept for special occasions. For ordinary purposes there were stoneware and earthenware, a substantial white ware being used on the table, I believe, for the most part, then as now. There was doubtless also more or less use of pewter vessels. Even as late as my own childhood, I remember that at the boarding school in Pennsylvania where I learned small Latin and no Greek at all, our milk and our coffee were served in large heavy pewter porringers, without handles.

There was also some silverware upon the tables of well-to-do families: this, too, was the real thing: triple and quadruple plate had not then taken possession of all households. But there were no silver forks, either real or plated. The forks were of sharp steel, and two-tined at that; I remember when we had no other. There is an apocryphal story that at one time fashion required that soup should be taken with a fork, as within recent years it has been decreed in regard to ice cream. If this were so in the days of the two-tined steel fork, we must believe that, in those days at

least, patience was permitted to have her perfect work. Merely the chasing of peas was attended with all the interest and excitement of fox-hunting.

The clothing of the women was for the most part of various woolen fabrics and of ginghams, calicos, cambrics, and muslins; the cotton goods were just coming freely into use: that of the men was usually of homespun wool and of leather, though the latter was becoming less usual. Nankeens were also brought from China, and doubtless used by both men and women. There were ten times as many sheep in the county in 1810 as in 1880. I should not be surprised if there were a hundred times as many as there are now. Perhaps this is not singular if many of the sheep of the early days were similar to the bipedal one of which Edward Hooker speaks on April 25, 1818: "Among a flock of sheep on the road in Cheshire, we saw a lamb whose hind legs were short & blunt below the hams, as if they had been frozen and lost their powers, & strange as is the fact he was actually walking about on his two fore-legs solely—except that occasionally he seemed to balance himself and rest a little on his hind stumps." Or if they were ordinarily such good electrical attractions as some in 1822, of which Mr. Hooker also writes (July 24): "There were heavy thunder showers at night. A flock of sheep,

forty-three in number, of which about half were very valuable merinos, belonging to my friend Egbert Cowles were killed by lightning—they were lying close together under a large tree."

While there was much, and often constant work to be done, there was also recreation. All, even the young ladies, discussed theology, somewhat hotly occasionally, but nevertheless they were able to dance and engage in other exercises of a frivolous character. This was always so, but undoubtedly the epoch under notice was in some respects one of special levity. President Porter says of the end of the century: "The old Meeting-house began to rustle with silks, and to be gay with ribbons. The lawyers wore silk and velvet breeches; broadcloth took the place of homespun for coat and overcoat, and corduroy displaced leather for breeches and pantaloons. As the next century opened, pianos were heard in the best houses, thundering out the 'Battle of Prague' as a *tour de force,* and the most pretentious of phaetons rolled through the village. Houses were built with dancing halls for evening gayety; and the most liberal hospitality, recommended by the best of cookery, was dispensed at sumptuous dinners and suppers."

When it came to imported cloths, a good round payment was in order. E. D. Mans-

field, who was a pupil of Edward Hooker, in 1819, in his "Personal Recollections" describes his own suit as of bright blue broadcloth at $14 per yard, with bright gilt buttons. He saw two or three gentlemen about this time in Connecticut (he does not say in Farmington, but I have no doubt that he could have seen such there) "dressed in the revolutionary style, with powdered hair, white top-boots, silk breeches and silver knee buckles." I myself remember two gentlemen in Pennsylvania, one, among my earliest recollections in the forties, and one some ten years later, who always dressed in substantially the same style.

Speaking of the church, Mansfield says, "but I must say that in the service the chief objects of my devotion were the bright and handsome girls around." Strange to relate, this was some twenty-five years before the Farmington Seminary was started. His first introduction to society here was at the house of the Hon. Timothy Pitkin. There were present five young men and eighteen young ladies, more than half of whom were named Cowles. It is said that there were three hundred persons of that name in the town. It was with these young men, perhaps, even more than it is in our own day, as it was with the Light Brigade; Cowles to the right of them, Cowles to the left of them,

Cowles in the front of them: always outnumbered.

Mansfield says that it was not customary for the older people to appear at the young people's parties.

One of the diversions indulged in largely a few years earlier may possibly not have been continued to this day—that is, the smallpox party. Before the efficacy of vaccination was discovered it was customary to inoculate with the smallpox at isolated buildings, where patients would have every possible attention. Such a building stood some three miles from here, near the old road to New Britain, to the eastward of Rattlesnake Mountain, and was used during the last decade of the eighteenth century. Near by is a flat rock upon which can still be seen rudely carved the names of a large number of the convalescing patients. Mrs. Earle quotes this singular letter of 1775: "Mrs. Storer has invited Mrs. Martin to take the small pox in her house; if Mrs. Wentworth desires to get rid of her fears in the same way we will accomodate her in the best way we can. I've several friends that I've invited, and none of them will be more welcome than Mrs. Wentworth."

Though wheeled vehicles seem to have been in common use, the saddle was still preferred by many, and the pillion had not long, if indeed it had yet wholly, fallen into disuse.

Thanksgiving Day was the great festival of the year. In fifteen years of Edward Hooker's journal, I do not find the slightest allusion to Christmas. The first mention of it (this in connection with a sermon) is in 1825. But Sunday, or the Sabbath, they had always with them—that is, from sundown on Saturday night until sundown on Sunday night. Serious dissipation upon Sunday did not go unchallenged. Thus Edward Hooker says in 1809, January 23: "The Captain [Porter] entertained me with a history of my classmate Champion's arrest & trial for traveling in the mail stage on Sunday."

In the evening the situation was different. The village has been well supplied with libraries in its time. The meeting for the drawing of books and for discussion of various subjects was on the first Sunday evening of the month, but Mr. Gay seems to imply that it was especially the elders who attended upon that occasion, while the boys and girls remained at home for quiet games, and the older youth possibly indulged in moderation in that occupation which in the rural districts, in my early days, I have heard denominated *sparking*.

It appears that Sunday evening was also the favorite time for weddings. I find constant allusion to such occasions, of which here is one from Mr. Hooker's journal: "Sunday Dec.

29 [1811]. Clear and Cold. *Evening;* Agreeably to invitation attended the wedding of R. Cowles & Fanny Deming at Mr. Deming's. Large concourse of relations and friends present, perhaps sixty—not much ceremony. The parties were seated in the room when the company arrived. None stood up with them—but Mr. Camp and Caroline sat near them and after the ceremony handed round two courses of cake, three of wine, and one of apples. The company in the different rooms then conversed half an hour—then those who could sing collected and sung very handsomely a number of psalm tunes,—and half an hour after had quite a merry cushion dance. I came away about 9 leaving still a large number capering round the cushion."

What a "Cushion dance" is, or was, I will not undertake to say.

I have said that these were prosperous times. When Chauncey Deming died, he was estimated to be worth two hundred thousand dollars, a fortune probably equivalent to one of five or ten millions to-day. Mr. Deming was a rich man, but had he possessed ten millions, he would have been forced to remain without comforts and luxuries which are now the daily privilege of the ordinary clerk or thrifty mechanic. There was no railroad, no telegraph, no telephone. There was no electric light, no gas, no kerosene—

not even, I am told, to any considerable extent, the malodorous whale oil of my early days. There were no water works, with pipes running through the house; there was usually no water in the bedroom, but ordinary ablutions were performed beside the kitchen pump or in the washhouse, in water direct from the well. I have been told of one fortunate family (Dr. Porter's) which had a terrace wall in its garden, of which advantage was taken to install a shower bath by building a shelter at the foot, and letting on an infant deluge at the top. There were no stoves, or there were only isolated specimens, in the dead of winter no warm chambers, for the fuel was wood and the fires were ordinarily confined to the hearths in the keeping room and the kitchen, where the inmates were liable to bake upon one side and to freeze upon the other. The warming pan was a blessed contrivance by which, in case of necessity, a little suggestion of the tropics could be imparted to the icy sheets. Edward Hooker tells of one terrific spell when he found it impossible to sleep for the bitter cold. Twenty-five cords of wood, which would be equal to a body four feet wide, four feet high, and two hundred feet long, were, I believe, considered a fair winter's supply for a household.

It is a tradition in my family, which appears to be supported at least in part by documen-

tary evidence, and which I like to encourage, that anthracite coal was discovered in Pennsylvania, in 1783 or 1784, by my grandfather's brother. Dr. Franklin, David Rittenhouse the astronomer, and others were interested in his enterprise, but no method of using the coal was devised for many years. In 1812, Colonel George Shoemaker took nine wagon-loads of coal to Philadelphia: "he sold two loads and gave the rest away, and some of the purchasers obtained a writ for his arrest as an impostor and a swindler."

To me, this foray into the past has been like crossing a river into a new land and making friends with a host of new people. I find these houses tenanted and these paths trodden by a varied multitude to whom hereafter they will still belong, of many of whom, of their true selves, of their characters and their thoughts, I know more than I know of most of those now living about me. I see the venerable Dr. Porter, still a young man, active, zealous, and beloved: I see Judge Whitman, and listen to his discourse upon precedents, and upon old saws and modern instances. I see the dignified Governor Treadwell, sturdy, though weighted with the responsibility of many and important causes, severe, yet meaning to be just: I listen to Major Hooker as he tells his more or less

clearly remembered reminiscences of the old times, and of that which he had heard from the fathers who were before him: I see the spruce and prosperous Timothy Cowles, or hear the wealthy Chauncey Deming cantering along the street or laying down the rule as to the proper income for a minister of the gospel: I take note of the experiences of the practical Squire Mix: I appear to approach the fountain head of legislative wisdom as I learn of the debates in Congress fresh from the lips of the Hon. Timothy Pitkin: above all, I listen to the very human and lovable, though not ecclesiastically regular Dr. Todd, as he drops words of wisdom and kindness, or draws from the strings of his violin echoes of that music of which his heart is full. And dozens of others rise before me, men and women both, who will forever people these shady ways along which they passed so often.

Not that all, even then, were to be counted among the sheep, and dignified and debonair. They had their goats then as now, and their Philistines. And they had their dramas too, their comedies and their tragedies: their tragedies which were such to all the world, and those deeper tragedies which pass behind closed doors, and within aching hearts, which dull the light of the sun and obliterate the stars, and take the glory from the spring, and wither the life of the soul; tragedies

which must now be passed by with averted eyes, or lightly touched, because those survive whose nerves still respond to them with a personal thrill.

Of course it was a period when the world was losing its virtue, its industry, and its earnestness: all periods are such. Governor Treadwell writes: "The young ladies are changing their spinning wheels for fortepianos and forming their manners at the dancing school rather than in the school of industry. Labor is growing into disrepute, and the time when the independent farmer and reputable citizen could whistle at the tail of his plough with as much serenity as the cobbler over his last, is fast drawing to a close. The present time marks a revolution of taste and manners of immense import to society, but while others glory in this as a great advancement in refinement, we cannot help dropping a tear at the close of the Golden Age of our ancestors, while with a pensive pleasure we reflect on the past, and with suspense and apprehension anticipate the future."

We can imagine with what satisfaction he penned and conned over these smoothly flowing periods. "Behold we are the people, and wisdom will die with us." I am not sure but that I have heard some such vaticination as the foregoing at other times, and in other places: even the air at Underledge seems at

intervals to bear a burden in like minor key. It is a good many thousand years since this note first breathed upon the bosom of the air. I imagine that as the sun drifts to the westward with us, the shadows lengthen and become somewhat distorted and slightly grotesque, and we, whoever we may be, upon whom its rays fall, are apt to look back upon the time when it was in the meridian, as to the golden age.

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the world is more and more.

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers, and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving toward the stillness of his rest.

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

Aye, though looking back upon those early days we see men of a sturdy race, strong men, and faithful men, and true men, eminently fitted to cope with the labors of their time; while we see dignity and honor meeting with their fair acceptance and respect, we also see another sort, of which our eyes are not enamored: if we see courtliness and comeliness, we see also grossness in family circles where to-day such exhibitions would be looked

upon as an almost unheard of and an unspeakable calamity. There are some things the loss of which we regret; but we cannot but remember that the setting sun bathes with glory even the most ragged rocks, and that the light which we see when we turn to look behind us is but the reflection of that great beacon which ever gleams before. *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis:* the times change and we change in them. And it may well be that neither they nor we are necessarily worse, simply because different.

And so I know that I was wiser

"When I dipt into the future far as human eye could see;
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

"Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change."

## IV

## UNDERLEDGE

IN summer-time the " Hanger " masks the ledge completely. In the winter season, when the trees are bare, I see between their trunks the slope with its jutting crags and at the top the straggling and broken rail fence, mended with savage barbed wire, with which my neighbor assumes to guard me from the intrusion of the cows: an ineffective attempt, for these athletic beasts fleer at fences, as love laughs at locksmiths.

Upon the slope of the mountain meadow twelve or fifteen rods in front of the " bluff rock," as it is known in the old records, stands the new cottage. I have heard of people who were said to have been born old. I can scarcely think that they can have been wholly agreeable, but with cottages it is otherwise, and in the devising and building of Underledge I have sought—honestly, and without subterfuge—to make a home which, being in the style of the previous century, will take but a little seasoning by rain and wind and sun to prove its right to its location. And I think that I have achieved a thorough success. For

anything in the appearance of the heavy stone walls, they might have been standing at the time, and have echoed back that "shot heard round the world" on the ever memorable nineteenth of April, 1775, to say nothing of the fratricidal shots heard at Baltimore on that other nineteenth of April, 1861. Above the walls, the red cedar shingles from far Oregon still retain a certain rawness; their rich color has disappeared with the rain drops down the leaders; they are passing through their uninteresting stage: but little timewill be required, however, to bring the whole into harmony. In matters of beauty and picturesqueness, all that nature needs is to be let alone.

The cottage rests upon a slight terrace which occurred casually in the molding of the sandstone slope during the past few thousand or few hundred thousand years, during which this *peneplain* has been worn down between the old stream of lava which forms the ledge, and the gravelly intervale where the great glacial sheet has here and there dumped its curious kames and eskers which the natives call Indian mounds. This terrace has been slowly accented by the furrows of cultivation, and more rapidly by the distribution of the material taken out in digging the cellar.

By the way, I like to use these strange and newfangled terms such as appear above, for they sound as if I knew a great deal about the

matter and you will have to go to your dictionaries to find out what they mean, or else remain uninstructed. My friend the Reverend took exception to my use of the term *talus*. He said that it was not a literary word. But I meant talus, and nothing else,—why should I not say it? You remember the reason given by Adam for calling the dog by that term when he was naming the animals:—he said that it looked like a dog, it moved like a dog, and it barked like a dog,—therefore, he called it a dog. I know no better way of choosing a word to describe a thing than to take that one which expresses it.

Past one end of the cottage, and somewhat diagonally toward the front, runs an old stone wall. A portion of this, near the wood, furnished much of the material used in the construction of the building. A fine round-headed white ash tree keeps sentinel at the point where a path breaks through this wall to wander down toward the pools at the foot of a rapidly sloping ancient pasture, now growing up in park-like fashion with thrifty cedars. When I took possession, the ground upon the upper side of this wall was probably a foot or two higher than that upon the lower side, the accumulation of years of washing by storms and of ploughing, and this feature also was taken advantage of in the shaping of the little lawn.

single thought. But the monkey will have to be put into a cage that fits his size, and the fellow with the muff on his head must find a place upon a lower shelf, or turn in on his side as if he had already heard "taps" beaten. And so the "Mabinogeon" will have to hob-nob with Palmer's "Mushrooms," and "Hyperion" with "Tartarin de Tarascon," Shakespere with Guizot, "Sir Roger de Coverley" with "The Sparrowgrass Papers," and Herbert Spencer with "Patroclus and Penelope" and "Gardening for Pleasure and Profit."

Well, never mind. Do we not knock about every day among all sorts of fellows, and find something in common between most of them? And even the contrast is in itself refreshing. Only there must be an inner circle close at hand, and if I cannot have within it all that I desire, there will at least be some that are among the dearest, and some without whom life would be quite another business. And here shall be all of Shakespere, and of Emerson, and of Browning, and all that I own of Tennyson, and Dante, and the "Earthly Paradise," and "Prue and I," and "Modern Painters," and the "Cathedral," and Chaucer and Spenser, and "The Voices of the Night," and George Herbert, and Clough and a lot of others—as many as the corner will hold. And it isn't so far after all

to the other shelves when rooms adjoin, and there is only one flight of steps to the second story, and the studding is less than eight feet high.

And I wonder where the pictures will go? They don't amount to much in market value, but they are cherished companions, and they form so many windows through which I look out upon the past, and have visions of other climes and other peoples. There are portraits of old friends, whose lips have said good-by for the last time before embarking upon that strange voyage concerning which we speculate so much, and with so little effective response; and portraits of the World's great ones who have been gone so long that we think of them no longer as dead but as living. And there are copies of the masterpieces of these, and shadows of monumental piles of the artistic past; bits of picturesque nature, and the scribe's own memoranda of other days and other scenes. Well, they will doubtless all fall into their places within a few days, and gradually grow familiar again in their new relations.

And now the scribe turns back a year in his musings, wanders again over the open hillside, replaces the four stones which were to mark the location of the four corners of the cottage, sits down upon the old wall under the spreading branches of the ash tree, and looks

through the vacant space to be occupied by the finished cottage, dreaming of the future and the things that might be. And he remembers some things which have happened since then, of which no faintest whisper was borne upon the air. *L'homme propose, et Dieu dispose,* and sometimes it is quite as well that *L'homme* doesn't know what is coming. Fortunately there dawns a New Year's day with every heart beat, and shall not each that follows in the coming twelvemonth be the happiest one of all the glad New Year?

And so the scribe comes back to the present, and closing the desk which is to be the work bench of the future, takes his lamp, and climbing over the great cases and carefully avoiding the brittle frames, makes his way through the silent house and up the stairway which has no strange stories yet to tell, and has not learned to creak, and takes possession of that upper chamber which is henceforth to be his. And though the starry lamps are not hung out to mark the stages of the night, and no breath comes to him from any one of all the millions that people the earth, to whom he is as if he were not, yet falls he softly into a deep and dreamless sleep.

"And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

## V

## THE FOG

THE tree tops on the slope loom vaguely through the fog which covers the valley and spreads up the hillside. Farther off they become a mere blur, a slightly denser grayness where all is gray and mysterious. The gray stones of the wall of the house are cold and damp, and the moisture glistens upon the newly oiled floor of the porch. The snow which still lingers on the southward-sloping hills, and lies thick under shelter of woodland and wall, has a sodden, spiritless appearance, compared with that which it wore a month ago. The ashen tone everywhere prevalent dulls hope and dampens courage.

I remember reading somewhere, a great many years ago, a novel entitled "Wearyfoot Common," written, if my memory does not betray me, by Leitch Ritchie. I recall nothing now of its story. I only have a sense of a waste of level plain near a great city, crossed by footpaths here and there, upon which the fog and mist descend from time to time, shrouding all details in their leaden pall, and

making doubtful and somewhat dangerous the wanderings of those engulfed therein, even as the haze falls from time to time on the path of the hero, hiding from him light, life, and hope.

The novel may not have been much of a novel, and the metaphor may have been a trifle overworked: I have not the least idea in regard to this, for it is longer than I like to remember since I read the book, and I have no recollection of ever having heard of anyone else doing so. I should like to see it again, to find how it would impress me. But for these many years this one picture presented in it has rested in my mind, continually recurring to thought, and keeping in memory, in the vague way that I have described, the book and its author, while hundreds of other volumes have one by one fallen back into the abyss of nothingness, so that their names and incidents would not awaken the slightest recollection.

And now, as alone I cross the threshold of the new home and gaze out into the fog, the chill raw air penetrating my garments, and causing my flesh to creep, I feel a certain reaction after the accomplished task. Coventry Patmore, in "The Angel in the House," confesses to a chill which falls upon the lover even in the instant immediately following the attainment of his heart's desire, a sensation that if this were possible of attainment, it was

not quite that which had been hoped for,—how does the phrase go?

"Poor in its need to be possessed,"

I think. There is something in this, perhaps, but there is probably more in the fact that "Othello's occupation's gone." It is said that were truth offered with the one hand, and the search after truth with the other, the wiser choice would be to accept the search after truth. Certain it is that there is no such sweetener of the sad hours, no such balm to the wounded spirit, as close occupation in a worthy cause.

"... Sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,"

is a phrase that expresses or explains more than one situation to which we are wont. Undoubtedly it is possible to consider one's course in certain matters with too much care and deliberation. Then truly

> "the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
> And enterprises of great pith and moment
> With this regard their currents turn awry,
> And lose the name of action."

But also there are for many persons in this weary world, often weary for such as they, occasions when the perplexities of life are insoluble, which perplexities recur to the spirit with a persistence of repetition and continu-

ance which is appalling; and for such there is no anodyne like work, work which requires consecutive thought, and is accompanied or followed by a result apparent, but leading on to other work. For the moment, and perhaps for many moments, contemplation and fruitless questioning are lost in productive and absorbing thought.

Over the whist table last evening a discussion was raised by the Professor, who remarked that the greater part of our existence is passed in a condition of indifference, a merely negative situation, involving neither pleasure nor pain. To this, Piscator, the Engineer, and the Scribe all excepted. The Scribe indeed admitted that there might be some, perhaps many, whom life handled in such a way that neither elation nor depression accompanied their ordinary experiences. For himself, however, he could not so record it. Deeper than ever plummet soundeth were the depths to which from time to time he sank, but no power upon earth could keep him there; and the acuteness of the pain of one moment was only to be compared with the intensity of the pleasure of another. It might be that Agur was right in his desire that he be given neither poverty nor riches, and that he should be allowed to sail life's main upon an even keel, but for him fate had not so willed it.

The Engineer in like manner compared his own experience of life's incidents to the *active* joy which he then felt in the cessation of pain wrought by a few unctuous drops from a strange bottle from foreign parts (the goiter in the neck of which was surely a grotesque joke upon the part of the worthy but sly monks who sent it forth) and to the preceding pain itself, too great, it seemed, to be appropriate to the slight cause from which it grew.

The fisherman munched his cheese and recalled with such loving and lingering fondness the events of the day,—the stony brook, the overhanging branches, the speckled trout,—that no one could doubt how life affected him.

Now, leaning upon the rail of the rustic porch, a tough cedar trunk to which the bark clings here and there, but which, where it has lost this screen, shows the most elaborate system of intaglio carving wrought by the patient worms, here in bold and intricately interlacing channels, there in delicate fairy tracery, I look into the dense fog and seek to decipher the secrets of the future. Who is the hero for whom the new home is to serve for a stage, and what is the drama which is there to be played out? For hero there must surely be, if no heroine, and life is so varied and so full of interest, when seen at the right

angle and with a lens of the proper power, that we shall never lack for the drama.

> " Into each life some rain must fall,
> Some days must be dark and dreary,"

and tragedy is apt to occupy the boards.

> " But taking the year together, my dear,
> There isn't more cloud than sun"

for most of us, and whatever the future may be, the world should be no worse for the play, if the actors bear their parts right nobly.

> " Then in life's goblet freely press
> The leaves that give it bitterness,
> Nor prize the colored waters less,
> For in thy darkness and distress
> New light and strength they give ! "

And so, though the fog be thick and the heavens be gray, do thou " Go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear, and with a manly heart."

## VI

## WAITING FOR THE RAIN

THE well has been useless for weeks. A careful search along under the ledge revealed a copious spring, the waters from which found their way by various channels through the orchard and across the mountain meadow, making marshy ground of my hayfield. Tracing the tide back toward the cliff, and removing a ton or two of loose stone, I found the water issuing from the hillside, a tiny pearly stream. Alas! but a few days later, and it had given me the slip, and sought a channel beneath. Another search developed another stream behind and nearer to the house, and this also I traced back toward the bluff rock, into the talus at its foot. Carefully removing stone after stone, I followed it as far as I dared (for he that is familiar with it knows what it is to trifle with the talus of a trap ledge), and digging downward, made a little basin, in which the limpid and delicious beverage might tarry a while before hurrying on its way to the river. Selecting a mark by which to gauge it, a stone at the side of the basin upon which the spark of light reflected from the edge indicated the

height of the water, I tested the flow with a quart measure; eight quarts per minute—ninety barrels per day. Surely a supply adequate for the purposes of anyone. And oh! how delicious it was.

So, pending a more satisfactory method, the pail was carried to and fro the short distance between the house and the spring, and everyone was happy. For two or three days the supply seemed to dwindle but slowly, and then I measured again: fifty barrels per day. I made the basin somewhat larger and deeper. The next day the spring was delivering at the rate of thirty-seven barrels. For two or three days it remained running at about the same rate, then fell to twenty-five barrels, then lower, ten barrels, and then, at the end of sixteen days, alas! it had gone completely dry, and the clay at the bottom of the basin was parched and cracked.

There has not been enough rain at any time during the winter or spring to fill the cistern, and now but a few inches of water cover its bottom. The few drops of rain which have fallen upon the roof within the past week or two have been greedily absorbed by the dry shingles.

Yet who would think it? Just a month ago the water from the melting snow came down from the hills, and our river went out over the valley, forming a great lake, upon

which the gale raised waves formidable enough to cause would-be passengers to draw back from the frail canoe which was moored by the shore, ready to serve as transport to the further side. And still the waters must be trickling underground on the hillsides, where long roots may reach them, for cherry trees, pear trees, apple trees, peach trees are in bloom, all the trees of the forest and field are rushing into leaf, and the sugar maples are perfect pyramids of little parasols with long fringes.

And the grass—oh! how lush and green it looks! especially on the mountain meadow, which was seeded down last autumn. Over the undulating slopes between the house and the road I see it waving, laughing in the hot air, with here and there a yellow spire of wild mustard which has suddenly flung its golden plumes to the breeze.

But these are the old inhabitants that have a strong grip upon life. In past times they have struck their roots deep down in Mother Earth, and through innumerable tiny fibers they gather the nutritious juices that they need. Not so the new-comers. Here are trees and shrubs and climbing vines by the hundreds, newly planted like myself—azaleas and roses and spiræas, honeysuckles and wistarias, maples and lindens and locusts and chestnuts and beeches and sweet shrub and

ivy and a host of others, and they cry " give us to drink or we perish." Most, even of these, are opening their leaves, and spreading them to catch the nightly dews, strengthened perhaps by the elaborated sap already stored in their veins.

And on the newly graded ground, grass seed has been sown, and lies waiting upon the parched surface. And the flower beds have been put in order, and this morning I planted the seeds in the " wild garden," thinking hopefully that perhaps the long delay might be almost ended. For yesterday the barometer began to fall, though slightly, and a thunderstorm, the cloud summits of which, cleft here and there by lightning, just showed above the Burlington hills, and then passed slowly up the Naugatuck valley beyond.

And this afternoon, as I write, I sit on the veranda waiting, waiting for the rain. *Will* it come? The haze lies over the valley and shrouds the distant hills, concealing those upon the horizon, and softening while relieving the outline of those which are nearer. The fleecy clouds in the sky become more and more numerous, but look dry and hot. They are mostly without characteristic shape, but just now I see to the northward a " thunder-head " clearly defined against the pure blue, which elsewhere is mostly covered with a gauzy veil. A fine breeze rises and tempers the oppressive

heat, and ripples over the surface of the pools in the marshy pasture.

As the cloud-ships pass before the sun, their shadows swiftly march over the waving grass of the meadow, envelop me for a moment, and climb the hills at my back. But over the valley at my feet they seem to have a more stately motion, their speed growing less in the distance, while the hills beyond disappear and again appear as, one by one, they are in turn enveloped and released.

Will it come—the rain? I fear not, and yet the barometer still is gently falling. The clouds, I believe, are always of vapor, and yet they look so dry, as if you might wrap yourself in them as in light thistledown. I heard the tree toads this morning, but they are treacherous promisers. They have often sung to me their siren song. Now I hear the robins and sundry other birds, which seem to have been awakened by the refreshing breeze; from my neighbor's house comes the sound of the carpenter's hammer; from the village streets I hear the bells from a passing team; in the distance are children's voices. And as for a moment, I raise my eyes from my paper, a yellow butterfly wings its way across the field —Psyche, in search of she scarce knows what; the something for which the wistful soul is always longing, but how seldom obtains in its completeness!

## VII

## THE WIND

WHEW! How it blows! One who has the privilege of living at Underledge does not need to go to the top of one of the great towers which modern imitators of the builders of Babel are erecting in the crowded cities, in order to receive the impression which he might obtain upon the topmast of a vessel at sea. There is no object standing as high as the cottage in the direction of "the Northwest wind, Keewaydin," nearer than four or five miles away, and as it ramps and tears around us I am glad that the walls are thick and that they are of solid rock.

No weather-strips have yet been put in place, and the searching blast finds its way through the cracks, and sets the draperies to waving. I dare not open the doors or windows upon that side of the house, lest all the loose articles in the room be sent flying in a heterogeneous flock to the farther corner. The piping is shrill through each narrow crevice, and if I venture for a moment to place the æolian harp upon the window-ledge with

ever so small a crack opened, a piercing shriek reproaches me for the inhuman act. The trees along the ledge wave and bend with a tumult and a roar like that of the stormy ocean beating upon a rugged shore.

Sitting in the middle of my library, or workshop, or study, the "keeping-room,"—for it is each of these,—all is calm and still. But it is as if I were in a tower built upon a rocky headland beside the raging sea, and an irrepressible feeling of unrest is compelled by the furious onset of the gale. I am reminded of the wild rush of the waters on that momentous voyage when I saw the world, as leaning against the side of my stateroom, and supporting myself by the window-frame, I glanced over the sloping deck, wearily watching that I might escape the mad assaults of my trunk, as it charged to and fro and threatened to rend me limb from limb if I incautiously stood in its way. I could imagine myself the hero of Victor Hugo's "Ninety-Three," and my trunk the great gun which is therein represented as taking possession of the gun-deck of the ship.

It was my one outing upon the high seas, and our big boat pitched and tossed like a chip upon the surface, alone in the center of that great circle, with the mighty deep, nothing but innocent little drops of water, profoundly stirred, and erecting its crests high in the face

in the storm and wreaks his impotent fury in bitter words:

> " Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow ! "

And we follow the tragedy to the end, scarcely conscious of the polyglot feature of the performance. Was there ever a more pathetic picture than that with which it closed, as the great actor played it, the king mourning over the dead Cordelia, dead in the hour of her vindication? I trow not.

" The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." But at length it has spent its fury, and as it subsides to a gentle murmur, still issuing from those distant hills, and the sun is setting, I am fain in thought at least to go to meet it, for I remember again that this is the wind of destiny; for

> " Thus departed Hiawatha,
> Hiawatha the beloved,
> In the glory of the sunset,
> In the purple mists of evening,
> To the regions of the homewind,
> Of the northwest wind, Keewaydin,
> To the Islands of the Blessed,
> To the kingdom of Ponemah,
> To the land of the Hereafter."

## VIII

## ROVER

ROVER is an Irish setter, with long, soft brown hair, dark on the head and back and front of the legs, and verging on a straw color where it "feathers out" on the throat and belly and thighs and tail. He was an awkward puppy, six months old, when I obtained him a year and a half ago, from which fact you may be able to compute his present age. At the inn where I was then staying he at once became a great favorite, spoiled by everyone about the place. I had a fancy that I should like to live with my dog, like the maidens in the story books, and so I took him to my room and had him eat and sleep by my bedside. But it did not work very well. His manners and habits were not first-rate, and then I sometimes had to go away and leave him for days at a time.

I remember when first I took him out walking with me. The ground was covered with snow and ice, upon which the poor fellow, loose-jointed and awkward at best, slipped and sprawled about in the most ridiculous fashion. And we went skating,—I was to do

the skating, and he was to be spectator and chorus,—and he performed his part to the life, getting plenty of exercise, and laughing at his own mishaps.

He was a great baby, full of the joy of living, and overflowing with love for everybody. His pleasure lasted into his dreams, and it was great fun to watch him, when some particularly delightful fancy came across his mind, while he was asleep. The quirk about his lips, and the pounding of his tail upon the floor, gave unmistakable evidence of the happy vision which entertained him.

Unfortunately, within a few weeks after I purchased him, he caught the distemper, and soon became a very sick dog indeed, coughing and moping, and generally miserable. I did not in the least know what to do for him, and had to write and telegraph for instructions and for medicine. He was removed to a warm room in the barn, where he could be conveniently cared for, leaving me more comfortable in his absence, for my apartment was not fitted for a canine hospital. And then David Mapelson—you know David?—told me that I should give him "beef, iron, and wine," with which he said that he had successfully treated several such cases. This I did, and thanks to this and other good treatment, he pulled through, not without permanent injury, however, which frequently manifests itself in

a sort of gasp or twitching. I am told, I know not how truly, that it is simply nervousness. Certain it is that it does not destroy his happiness, or deter him from active exercise.

I am sorry to say that I neglected Rover, but he never bore malice or resented it, and would always show the utmost joy when I appeared. He would climb all over me at once in the most indiscriminate and uncomfortable fashion, with a particular fancy for biting playfully at my feet and at the legs of my trousers. He and Shep (Shep is a shepherd's dog living, also, at the inn) became great cronies; in fact, almost inseparable. The comrades would go away often, and be absent for hours together.

When I moved into the cottage in February I left Rover at the inn, for I had made no preparations for his comfort. I had nothing for him to eat, and besides, I did not know quite what to do with him. Moreover, the cottage was infested with mice, for which reason I had secured the services of a kitten, one Titus Andronicus, of whom more hereafter. Titus had been brought up, not "by hand," but in a barn—in fact, I 'spect he "just growed," and being of a very timid disposition—at least, in my presence—I feared to complicate the situation by introducing the canine element. But one day I thought it was time that Rover should become a per-

## IX

## TITUS ANDRONICUS

THAT'S the kitten—or cat—which is it? When does a kitten cease to be a kitten and become a cat? When does a boy cease to be a boy and become a man? I am afraid that it depends upon the boy—and the kitten. Some of us, probably, will never cease to be boys, and so with kittens. So with Titus. Even his name does not depress him. But then he is called "Tight" for short.

Titus Andronicus is Maltese by descent, and emanated from a barn. I suppose it was a promotion to be taken from a barn to a house, but Titus did not think so, or, if he did, he must have been overcome by the grandeur of the cottage, for when the bag in which he had been brought up in the grocer's wagon was opened he took refuge under the sink and wholly refused to enter into communication with me. I had just moved in, and had no time for formalities, so I left him to his own devices and went on with my work arranging books at the other end of the house. An hour or two later, hearing a sudden rush,

I went to see what was the trouble, and there stood Titus, less than a yard away from his original post, with a mouse in his mouth. It appeared that the mouse did not understand the rationale of a cat (or kitten) sulking in that manner, and becoming tired of waiting for some movement, had gone to see what was the matter.

It was some days after his arrival before it was thought best to give him a chance to leave the house. But one evening came an eclipse of the moon, and in the excitement of the moment the door was left open and Titus disappeared. Great was the lamentation, for his domestication had already advanced so far that occasionally, as a very great favor, he would permit himself to be touched. We feared that he had returned to the scenes of his childhood, and for two days we saw nothing of him. Then he reappeared, and conveyed to Hickory Ann's mind a distinct impression that "he would not care if he took some milk." Of course so modest a request could not be gainsaid, and the beverage was provided.

After it was absorbed Titus beamed all over. His tail stood up as if it were made to bear a signal pennant, and he walked around from chair to chair rubbing against the legs, and even sometimes ventured within the reach of his human acquaintances. A gentle smooth-

am afraid that if he should now encounter any of his old companions of the barn, he would express himself disdainfully. He would have to do it silently, however, for he has the most ridiculous little miau that ever you heard.

# X

## RUMEX AND PLANTAGO

SOME there are who despise the wild carrot, and some who cannot endure the daisy, which they persist in calling whiteweed, indignant that it should masquerade—this great, sturdy flaunting beauty—as the "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower." And some, I trow, revile the butter and eggs, which sounds so appetizing and nutritious. The despisers of "pusley" are numberless, regardless of the fleshlike feeling of its stems and of the fact that, if the worst comes to the worst, the gardener can treat it as the barbarian does the missionary.

But I, I have a mortal hatred of yellow dock and plantain. What vulgar proletarians so shameless as they? How, like Paul Pry, they hope they don't intrude, and then plant themselves in the path so that it is impossible to escape them. They precede you from the highway along your own lane, disdaining not to slink in the wheel-tracks or under the horses' hoofs, and multiply riotously by the doorstep wherever the footfall is not absolutely constant. In this situation Plantago is easily the

more obsequious. Like Uriah Heep, it is so 'umble that no crouching can be too mean for it.

Rumex, on the contrary, though when it will it can penetrate a crust of clay which seems almost like sheet-iron, is well content to luxuriate in the richest soil of the moist meadow, remote from wheel of wagon or foot of man or beast. Give it but a chance, and it will send its great tapering orange root far down toward the subsoil, and carry its head high in the air, crowned with a raceme bearing innumerable rusty seeds, which it will distribute freely for the common use.

My mountain meadow is covered with a carpet of the most wonderful green grass, the growth from last Autumn's sowing. Among the grass there are several million buttercups, to say nothing of the daisies and dandelions, which I shall not attempt to count. But I have a friendly feeling for these, and am quite ready to rejoice in their blossoming. I feel it a personal commendation when my neighbor tells me that the daisies make very good hay. But with the yellow dock it is war to the knife. Either it must go or I must go, and it is still an open question which. I mean to enforce clôture, but I have reached the point where I see that I cannot do this single-handed.

How many thousands of these and of the plantains I have already disposed of I cannot

say. I start out in the morning armed with a sharp, long-handled weed-knife and circumnavigate the cottage, and I follow the driveway out to the road, a distance of several hundred feet, seeking to discrown my enemies wherever seen. And then I retrace my steps, and behold, like Minerva sprung full-armed from the brain of Jove, they instantly plant themselves again in the pathway along which I have just marched in the rôle of a conqueror.

Have they sprung into being since my passage? Sometimes I think that they have. I know that they can appear with leaves several inches in length (I speak now of the Rumex —the yellow dock) within an interval of a very few hours. The leaves have probably been well developed under the surface, and suddenly a point is reached where they have strength and elasticity enough to throw off the superincumbent soil. But in most instances their appearance is merely another evidence of the inaccuracy of human observation. I looked, but I did not see. And so I am once more cautioned as to the weakness of the testimony of my senses, and can only console myself with the reflection that, weak as the testimony is, it is the best that I have.

Coarse and obtrusive and objectionable as Rumex is, I am sure that it does not cause me so much annoyance as Plantago. The very meek, groveling habit of this wretch is his

worst offense. All members of the genus Rumex are not equally offensive; the sorrels, for instance, overgenerous in offering their company as they are, do much to entertain by their contribution of color to the landscape. And there are degrees of baseness even in Plantago; but for the Major, who may be counted, as it were, the head of the family, he can best apologize for himself by a decorous silence. The most that can be said for him is that his petioles are sometimes beautiful in color, but these he keeps concealed.

## XI

## —AND RHUS TOXICODENDRON

A CRITIC tells me, "You have struck the bucolic philosopher's note, and it twangs acceptably, but why don't you make a chord of it? Really, yellow dock and plantain are hardly worth writing about unless you reason from them to humanity, or dogs or cats or sich."

Now, of course, this is open to more than one construction. But what it seems most strongly to imply is, that I might point a moral and adorn my tale by designating certain classes among those animals indicated in which the attributes named take on a graphic character, so that they lend themselves to picturesque description. This is the sophisticated citizen's view. The bucolic philosopher, going meditatively upon his rounds, inhaling occasionally the sweet breath of kine, and seeing his own image reflected in their mild eyes, viewing the clouds softly floating in the summer sky, and the new leaves lightly waving in the breeze, irrigating his parched acres with the sweat of his brow, and eating

with a hearty relish his "Spare feast, a radish and an egg," without the radish and with an extra egg thrown in to make good measure; the bucolic philosopher, I say, is content to reflect the picture, which he at the same moment absorbs, without making invidious comparisons. But the perverted citizen sees in these harmless manifestations of nature an admirable opportunity for the castigation of his fellow-creatures, bipedal and quadrupedal. Especially is he critical of his brother man. But what is the fact? The other day I had a word to say about Rumex and Plantago—yellow dock and plantain. That word had not reached the press, when, behold, along comes Homo rumex himself, in search of a job. A great, hulking, round-shouldered, long-legged, slab-sided boy, with slouched hat and rusty coat, looking almost as shabby as myself. And he, at a word, took arms against a sea of yellow docks, and, by opposing, ended them. That is, he ended a great many of them, inasmuch as whereas two days ago I viewed with dismay the rank growth overtopping my beautiful green grass, I can now look complacently across the velvet slopes and feel sure that henceforth the field is mine.

And what task, think you, did this knight paladin next accept? The "Mountain Meadow," with its border of ledge and woodland, near the northerly end of which the

cottage has been erected, contains about eight acres and is bounded upon one side (next the road) by an old rail fence standing upon the remnant of a ruined wall, and upon two other sides by loose and sprawling walls of trap and bowlders. Among these moss-grown stones, the Rhus toxicodendron—the poison ivy, poison oak, poison vine, or mercury, as it is here called—has intrenched itself, and each year, in the greatest profusion, it greets the advancing Spring with its delicate, juicy red triple leaflets, and each Autumn borders the field with a phylactery of crimson and scarlet and gold. Now it is said that the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, and when Mercury is in the ascendant I am obliged to avow myself one of the vanquished. It was not the wind that overcame the sturdy traveler, and it was a gnat or a black fly or a mosquito or something of that sort that conquered the king of beasts. He that has felt the irritation occasioned by the poison ivy does not covet a repetition of the affliction. I happen to be one of those subject to this influence, as many are, and a year ago I hired a worthy citizen, who vowed that he feared it not, to extirpate the vine, root and branch. He set to work valiantly, but the next day I noticed that he did not reappear, and, meeting him some time later, I discovered that he had succumbed to the malign influence, and thereafter his bash-

fulness deterred him from attempting another interview.

Now, the preux chevalier to whom I have referred, whom, at his coming, I thought to recognize as Homo rumex, has "tackled" this job, just as he has each of the others at which I have put him, with the single response, "All right, Sir," and since the middle of yesterday afternoon (I do not mean to include the night) he has continued it with dogged persistence. He has not suffered, and does not think that he will. But whether he will or will not, he adheres to his undertaking with a constancy that ought to transfigure him, and, I am sure, must in time. I shall keep my eyes upon him, and expect one day to see a spiritual efflorescence manifesting itself. I am afraid that it will be indescribable when it comes, so you must not expect me to indicate it by courses and distances.

But about that moral. I do not quite see how I can get it in now without letting my readers perceive that it is the moral. It ought to be so mixed up with the treacle that none could distinguish it, and, in fine, the compound should produce so excellent an impression that those who absorb it should one and all, like Oliver, cry for "more."

There is Homo rumex, and there are also Homo plantago and Homo toxico. We know each and every one of them. For the

species Canis and Felis—that is another story. "And sich." Here is opened a wide door. The world is all before me where to choose, and were you to follow me, I should lead you far afield.

I think that Homo plantago is not largely represented in this country. There are specimens to be found from time to time, and they are nicely fitted for preservation—their nature well adapted them for pressing. The trouble with these, however, as with many other things that are easily handled, is that you do not care for them.

The rough, coarse Homo rumex, however, grows freely in our soil. In fact, there is hardly one of our multifarious climates to which he does not seem to be fitted, and in his rank growth he jostles out of existence so many of the more delicate sort that one can hardly consider him as other than a common pest. And the worst of it is, perhaps, that he seeds so freely that, whereas the finer species scarcely and with difficulty hold their own in numbers, the rumex multiplies with great rapidity and is in danger of possessing the field, if the measures that I have here adopted, or some other "equally as good," are not soon applied.

But what shall I say of Homo toxico? I think that he is not so much a rural product (we have an occasional specimen of the plantago and our fair share of the rumex) but the

air of cities seems to suit him well. In New York, especially, he multiplies rapidly. The police have much to do with him, though they rarely collect the best specimens, but it has pained me to notice during the past year that he seems also to be well represented upon the police force.

Of this species there are many varieties, and the most dangerous are not always those that are most generally recognized as such. There are some, and these the best known, whose poison seems mostly superficial in its effect. These are comparatively harmless; at all events they are easily recognizable, and can be guarded against. But there are others which grow less obtrusively, being almost wholly concealed among innocuous species, whose virus is much more subtle and insidious; sometimes acting very slowly and not clearly perceptible until it has so far permeated the system as to be ineradicable. For these, only one treatment is of any value. They must be completely rooted out.

## XII

## WISHES

ALAS! for the vanity of human expectations! Johnson said "human wishes," but he was "away off," as the boys have it. How in the world are we to get along without the use of slang in this day and generation? To be sure, some of us to whom it is not wholly familiar are likely to bring it in on inappropriate occasions, like the minister of a certain church, which shall be nameless, who a few years ago spoke from his pulpit of one who had "gone where the woodbine twineth." He meant well, and the expression is certainly poetical enough in form to be appropriate, and may now have become classical, but at the time and under the circumstances it was not deemed so by his hearers, and the use of it did not promote decorum in the church. But slang forms the small change in popular language, a sort of token currency, and often presents to the mind a picture, allegorical it may be, which attains distinctness at small cost. The temptation to use it is at times almost irresistible, and in fact its use is not infrequently, as in the

instance above referred to, quite unconscious.

Alas! I say, for the vanity of human expectations! Another victim has been sacrificed in the good cause of ridding the world of noxious elements, and as the propitiatory pile increases, my hopes of early success become more faint. My kinglet of the verdant mead, the pseudo Homo rumex, who valiantly attacked a doughty foe, and so quickly proved that he was a (very unassuming) prince in disguise, who for a time sustained his cause with pertinacity, was, I am sorry to be forced to say, subdued at last, and driven from the field, a vanquished hero. His bravery was in vain; the foul fiend—Rhus toxicodendron—"got him," and so are the mighty fallen. I am compelled to see myself as in a vision, calling upon my hardy neighbors one by one, and sending them forth to do battle with the dragon that lies waiting along my borders, only to behold them one by one prostrated before it, victims to its fiery breath.

I have a standing controversy, good-humored it is true, with my neighbor, the Baroness, over the merits and demerits of dear old Mother Nature, into whose hands we have been delivered. She draws for me horrible pictures of the manner in which the old lady—I think she considers her a sort of harridan—roasts us and stews us, scarifies us and drowns

us by turns in purely malignant delight. And I, on the other hand, find her spreading for us velvet carpets all decked with flowers, cooling our brows with gentle zephyrs, wafting to us fragrant odors, whispering to us the sweetest melodies and harmonies, unfolding before us glorious visions in the upper air, such cloud-capp'd towers and gorgeous palaces and solemn temples as ne'er were based upon the solid earth, revealing to our inner eye

> "The light that never was on sea or land;
> The consecration, and the poet's dream."

And so we go on our allotted paths, seeing ofttimes, it may be, the picture that is behind the retina, rather than that which is reflected upon it.

"The vanity of human wishes." But are they indeed vain? I am disposed to contest the point. It is an old proverb, usually quoted in a somewhat contemptuous tone, "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." But wishes are horses, and beggars—I suppose that we are all of us beggars in some sort—do ride upon them into all kinds of beautiful regions. It is true that sometimes, with loose or with taut rein, we may ride to the—but no, we never mention him. There are indeed labyrinthine paths of dalliance, through which these docile steeds may oft meander, which lead to Castle Dangerous and the dread

abode of Giant Despair. I suppose that we cannot travel by any conveyance without a certain risk of disaster, and that our accident policies will not always save us. Perhaps it may be necessary to have even our wishes put through a sort of civil-service examination before we intrust our welfare to their keeping. A competitive examination might be best, but I am inclined to think that in this instance a pass examination may serve.

Where would modern civilization be if this great cavalcade had never started? I fear still in the limbo of nothingness. He that has no wish upon which to ride perhaps may fear no fall, but likewise he need anticipate no rise. How horribly dull and dispiriting is the even tenor of his way! In my brief time I have done something in the way of pedestrianism, and I remember well how upon a jaunt of half a dozen miles over a level Long Island plain, ever the same straight road stretching before me, ever the same flat fields to the right and to the left, ever the same low tree-covered hill in the distance, the spirit became relaxed and the muscles flabby, and the whole man wearied of the monotony.

And then I remember another day's tramp from Northampton across the Berkshire Hills, and how the road climbed and fell, surmounting breezy hilltops, as those highways always do (for their builders do not seem to have

learned that the bale of a pot is no longer when it is lying down than when it is standing up), and dipping down into cool and shady dells. And I remember that when I became an hungered in the middle of the day, I stopped at a wayside shop and bought some crackers. And those crackers! I knew just as surely that they were a remnant of the supplies brought over in the *Mayflower* as though some deponent had solemnly stated the fact to me "on information and belief." If the grinders had then been few, they would certainly have ceased from their labors long before nature had been so far restored as to be able to continue in as cheerful a spirit as that in which she had begun.

And then Peru church was passed, and the place of the dividing of the waters, for tradition had it that the rain that fell upon one side of the roof sought the sea by way of the winding Housatonic, and that which fell upon the other reached the same all-embracing receptacle upon the broad bosom of the Connecticut.

And always there was a higher summit to which to aspire, or a deeper valley or shadier glen to explore, and the sun sank lower and lower, as Hinsdale and Dalton and Pittsfield, in turn, fell behind, and had only just gone safely to rest when the hills of Lenox opened to receive me, still far from being either a physical or a spiritual wreck.

Yes, I can conscientiously speak a good word for the favorite charger upon which the world has ridden this many a day. He needs careful training, and *la haute école* is none too good for him. He can be taught all manner of gaits provided for in the ménage, the *piaffer,* the *traverse,* the *demivolte,* but the great danger is that he will too naturally and constantly be found traveling *terre-à-terre.* Let him be well looked after, and let his rider always keep him well in hand (and nobody has any business upon a horse's back who is not ready to conform to these conditions), and a more kind, companionable, and serviceable steed is not to be found.

The vanity of human wishes, indeed! Except it be, as the preacher saith, that all is vanity, I would fain believe that it is that which men most ardently wish for that is often the saving element in their lives.

## XIII

## THE MINERS

WITH the thermometer at eighty-five in the shade, I find myself not in the shade but in the sun, too much absorbed in watching the busiest set of workmen I have recently seen to seek the inviting shelter close at hand. Fortunately, a gentle but constant breeze somewhat tempers the unseemly heat, and it is permitted, at this time in the afternoon and at this distance from the highway, to discard that outer garment which men most do affect in polite circles.

As I think I have already stated, the veranda faces northwest, and its timbers are of rustic cedar. In front lies one of the loveliest valleys that lovely New England can show, now juicy green with the fresh summer foliage, tempered here and there with the golden yellow of innumerable buttercups. Birds in great numbers flit across from moment to moment, and the air is full of their notes, the Baltimore orioles, the robins, and the bobolinks keeping up an untiring refrain from morning until night. The bobolink has

a bright and rather elaborate song, for which one cannot very readily find words. The oriole, according to one of my neighbors, says, "Philip, Philip, is your nest ready?" Last year it was, rather unseasonably, "Philip, Philip, are the chestnuts ripe?"

Beyond the valley the distant hills, rising tier after tier, seem to float in the haze into which they finally fade away on the horizon. To the left lies the undulating mountain meadow stretching southward and westward to the old highway—a perfect sea of green and gold, which Madam Magnusson told me a few days ago was the very picture of an Icelandic valley. I do not know what thought could be more comforting as I sit in the torrid heat with my back turned to Phœbus—not in any sense of disrespect, but partly that my broad hat may shade my paper and partly that I may the more comfortably watch my little band of miners.

Perhaps you are curious to know who these may be. I have said that the timbers of the veranda are of rustic cedar.

This morning, as I made my usual round to see how my vines, my rosebushes, and other ventures were progressing, I discovered the miners. Some days earlier I had noticed a sprinkling of sawdust, as I thought it, near the pier which supports the post on the west corner, stupidly forgetting, as one will, that no

carpenter had worked there for several months. I now saw the actual artificers busily employed. Entering a crack where the trunk had, as it were, been folded together, a party of large black ants have taken possession, and, public holiday though it be, they are working with might and main, constructing what mysterious winding passages within I know not, and can only surmise.

The crack had been widened slightly at the foot of the post, especially close to the floor, but not to a breadth of more than an eighth of an inch. Beginning at a point about three-quarters of an inch higher, it has been again widened for about an inch in height. Between these openings it would appear that a floor has been left, but the work of excavation goes on upon both levels, though mainly upon the second. One after another the little workmen run out to the entrance with their mandibles full of sawdust, drop it in the outer passage, and return to the interior. Of course I cannot identify them, unmarked, and I do not know whether the same workers who are engaged in the transportation also do the excavating. But I know that, as the material accumulates at the entrance, from time to time a party come out and remove it therefrom. Of these some appear more conscientious and much better workmen than others. A few merely carry the material two or three inches

and then leave it lying upon the floor. So far as I have observed, all that do this are small, and therefore probably young. But the others know no half-way measures. Taking a good mouthful or armful—sometimes it seems both—they run out to the edge of the veranda, a distance of only about six inches, drop their load to the ground whence there is no danger of its return, and then go back for another cargo. While returning they occasionally notice the material scattered untidily by the others, and carefully remove it.

When I revisited the scene of operations after my first observation, I found the boards quite clear, excepting at the entrance. I questioned Hickory Ann as to whether she had been sweeping there, and, finding that she had not, concluded that the busy little intruders had been doing it themselves. I was probably mistaken, however. The breeze had slightly changed its direction, and had, I think, performed this service for them. I imagine that the ants perceived this, for afterward, while I watched, they appeared to place considerable reliance upon this sort of aid in the disposal of their débris.

Hickory Ann proposes to rout the invaders with a pitcher of hot water, at which I am horrified. Of what account is the security of the cottage when compared with that of such an industrious family?

## POSTSCRIPTUM

Perhaps the hard-headed common sense of Hickory Ann's suggestion should have been regarded, after all. Certain it is that the black warriors now march and countermarch over the veranda floor; they have invaded the keeping-room; they cast longing eyes on the sugar-bowl; they have climbed the golden stairs and intruded into the halls of repose. It is true that I do not " reckon up by dozens " the advancing host, but only here and there meet solitary adventurers—free-lances in appearance—and these are at once tried by drumhead court martial, with the usual result: they meet a spy's fate, and are mercilessly executed. But how do I know that they are not acting systematically under sealed orders, that a lodgment has not already been effected in the very heart of my citadel—not merely an outpost captured—and that the day is not already named for my deposition?

## XIV

## COMIN' THRO' THE RYE

YOU should have seen them—don't you wish that you had? There was Phollis of course,—das verſteht ſich, cela va sans dire,—but where was Phillis? And there was Iolanthe,—it was her party; and there too were Arabella and Araminta, and Nicolette, Guinevere, Elaine, Bonnie Lesly, St. Cecilia, Airy-fairy Lilian, Lady Psyche, Cinderella, Andromeda, Galatea, Atalanta, and Brünhilde, and a dozen others, all trigged out as if Kate Greenaway, or Walter Crane, or somebody else "equally as good" had been their tiring servant. And it wasn't rye at all, only good honest grass in which they waded up to their waists. For the sun was just hiding in the clouds before it should sink behind the western mountains, and the path had lost itself among the tall stems which conspired to hide it. And so with dulcimer and sackbut and psaltery and harp, in broken lines they made their way amid the thick greenery over the gentle slopes which lie between the highway

and the cottage, and I thought that I had never in my life seen a fairer sight.

Even though one may have fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, or perchance may have gone still farther, so that all the branches are gray and bare, and naught appears to the eye but chill and hoary winter, yet it is sometimes warm under the snow, and there may even there be a throb responsive to the pulses which still beat in the upper air, where the sun shines and the birds sing.

> "Now came still evening on, and twilight gray
> Had in her sober livery all things clad."

The rainbow hues of sunset did not tint the curtains of night for the little fête; but shadows crept softly over the hills and settled down upon the verdant slopes. It was the month of roses, and the sun had poured itself into the blossoms and into the berries, until they fairly filled the air with their sweetness.

My guests swarmed through the rooms and out upon the loggia; and some strayed to the place where the little chickens said peep! peep! and some went down by the pools where the frogs sang ditto. And then as the darkness gathered, they all settled upon the veranda rail and upon the steps and upon the floor in groups which brought sunlight into the shadows of night, and merry laughter alternated with vibrating strings and choral song.

And I am sure that the scribe was not the only one who regretted it, when the curfew sounded, and in a rambling line these bright-hued birds of passage disappeared in the darkness.

## XV

# KICKING AS A FINE ART

DID you eve· see a hay tedder at work? It is really the most ridiculous-looking of modern agricultural machines, but it "does the business." If you have not seen it, you are to imagine a grasshopper made of wood and iron, and withal a sidewheeler. The farmer or the farmer's man hitches his horses to this affair, and, mounting into a comfortable seat atop, gravely drives to and fro over the hay field, with the machine's ungainly legs kicking out behind him, and tossing into the air the new-mown hay. I challenge you to make your first observation of the performance with a sober countenance. It will be as difficult as it was for the members of the whistling class to begin their exercises properly when they heard the injunction, "Prepare to pucker."

But you will not have watched the operation many minutes ere you will be filled with admiration at its effectiveness, and disposed to give due meed of praise to the man who thus so ingeniously utilized the gentle art of kicking. To be sure, it is not so picturesque a

sight as the old-fashioned one of a party of men and boys and girls going through the field with pitchforks, and spreading the hay with these, but it is much less exhausting, and then, in that prosaic ride, what dreams may come!

In our little village we have just had a sample of kicking of another sort, but as brilliantly successful. Perhaps I have before remarked that this is one of the most beautiful villages in New England: not a village out of a bandbox, combed and brushed and set in order every morning, and with no sprig of clematis or branch of wild rose ever permitted to wander from its place, but a real old-fashioned New England village, with its tree-shaded streets and its grassy banks, on which the daisies dare to grow, with here and there a spick-and-span lawn, with dark evergreens and drooping shrubbery and carefully groomed footpaths.

The village lies upon a side hill. As I have elsewhere remarked, its Main Street is nearly a mile in length, quite narrow, and with the houses upon one side in many places considerably higher than those upon the other, the one side being usually raised upon a bank, the other lower than the level of the roadway. At some distance on either side is another street, running nearly parallel, one of them, however, for but a short distance; and there

are several lanes crossing from the Main Street to the "New Street," nearer the river. Our famous school occupies a number of old dwellings, scattered along on either side of Main Street, and other buildings upon the road which mounts the hill toward Underledge.

A year ago the new monster—the "trolley"—made its appearance in our neighborhood, and with many misgivings we permitted it to pass along our northern border on its way to a neighboring manufacturing village, which is situated within the limits of the same town, and which, like the Old Man of the Sea, we are unable to shake off. Our interests are diverse and we are unequally yoked together. We wish a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii,* but our affectionate partner does not desire it, and there we rest.

Well, ever since the iron rails were laid we have had rumors that an effort was to be made to run a branch line down through our Main Street, for the purpose of connecting with towns to the southwest of us. No such statements have been made by those representing the railway company to those who were opposed to such a movement; indeed, the charter was obtained in the form in which it stands upon the distinct pledge that no effort was to be made to use that route. But there are a few persons upon the street, and others in the

generations to confer? and that certain kinds of damage, once effected, can never be repaired? Let us have a revival of public spirit in these matters, and be ready to challenge every attempt on the part of money-making corporations to trample upon private rights, and to destroy natural beauty, until it is conclusively shown that what is demanded is strictly in the public interest, and that the advantage desired cannot be attained in any other way.

The new electric-railway system is a great convenience, and it is to be hoped that it may prove of great practical utility. But there are good ways and bad ways of doing a good thing, and it is to be remembered that dignity and beauty are of value as well as cheapness and speed, and that the integrity of private rights is the first essential to every member of the community, be he poor or be he rich. While private comfort must yield to public necessity when the necessity is shown, it is always safe to ask in any particular case whether that which masquerades under the garb of public necessity be not in fact private greed.

Our highways have been constructed at a great expense to the public, for the public use. When a private corporation asks the right to appropriate them for the purpose of making money, it is the first duty of sensible citizens to

inquire whether this right can be given without serious inconvenience to the dwellers thereon, and to the public for whom the highways were constructed, and next whether there is no other method or route by which what is needed may be accomplished without the inconvenience or damage sure to be entailed by the course proposed.

Do I hear someone saying, "Avast such sordid details of humdrum vulgar affairs: what have trolley railway corporations and legislative committees to do with literature? Let us hear of robber barons, and of knights errant, and of tall and slender and graceful maidens, and of their release from the clutch of horrible dragons." Well, the point seems to be aptly made and yet I am not quite sure. I wonder whether in the actual occurrence the descent of the robber baron upon the peaceful village, and the laying waste of homes, and the destruction of familiar objects, for the personal profit of the marauder, were any less prosaic to the sufferers at the time, or any more attractive in their consequences, than the banding together of men into corporate bodies for the purpose of attaining certain profitable ends, regardless of the individual rights which must first be trampled upon, of the destruction of the privacy of their victims, of their convenient access to their homes, of cherished beauty of surroundings which has required hundreds of

years of loving care to develop and protect? Or whether the old-time appeal of the villagers of the overlord for defense against the rapacity of the pillagers was any more heroic or poetic, in fact, than its modern equivalent of an appeal to the legislature against the brigands of this time, whose nefarious enterprises are frequently carried through under color of statute law? Were the wives and maidens of old more worth saving than the wives and maidens of to-day who sought for deliverance according to my story? Or is there anything more poetic in a monster with glaring eyes, and huge jaws and teeth, and sharp claws, and slippery scales, than in a corporation bearing the explicit or implied authority of the State through a skillfully devised charter, by which the rights of the many can be manipulated so as to promote the advantage of the few?

Picturesqueness seems to follow ruin, and I suppose that the accent of age is requisite to touch with romance the struggles of to-day. But age draws on apace, and one day even the things of the present will be old. This record will then be buried in oblivion, but not, let us trust, the freedom and the beauty for which man are struggling to-day, as they struggled in the times that are past.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever

things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

## XVI

# PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD

THE man or woman who carelessly or unnecessarily destroys natural beauty is still a barbarian, whatever be the nationality, social position, or wealth of which he or she may boast. It is time that the American people should wake up to a realization of this.

It is true that we are still very young. As a people we are only about three hundred years old and as a nation we are little more than one hundred, but it would seem that even the short period of three hundred years might be sufficient in which to overcome the rawness of youth, to acquire some appreciation of the beautiful as well as the showy or useful, some knowledge of and love for the refinements of life, some perception of the fact that while that which is the work of fine art is good, that which comes first-hand from the supernal powers is sometimes good also.

> "Even that art which you say adds to nature,
> Is an art that nature makes."

And you may safely trust her to do many things nobly without your intervention.

The American people are a "hustling" people. Now hustling is a good thing in its place, provided that even in that place you cannot have a better, but it is a very bad thing when out of place. One of the most beautiful objects that is ever seen is a soap bubble, but a soap bubble cannot be made by hustling. Yet hustling can very quickly destroy it. A noble elm may take a hundred years to build, a noble oak five hundred, but a hustler can destroy either of them in a day. A roadside left to the care of the rain and the wind and the sun, with the birds for planters, may take on a grace and beauty of form and color which will soothe a wounded spirit and bring balm to an aching heart, but a road "mender," or a farmer with a taste for "tidying up," can make a hot and barren waste of it in an hour. A shady glen between climbing hills seems the very haunt of coolness and repose, and as you look upon it you would fain lie at length upon its side and let the soft air bring freshness to your tired brow. But the desire is not so strong after it has been made a dumping place for clam shells and tomato cans, scraps of paper and old junk.

And, coming to those things to which the hand and mind and heart of man have directly contributed, it may be remarked that a new

dwelling is fresh and clean and comfortable. But it is not until many hearts have beaten in it, until many lives have aided to make it a whispering gallery, until the tooth of time has lightly gnawed the sharp corners of its timbers, its brick and its stone, until the elements have softly tinted it, that it has become a home in the fullest sense, and sacred with the sacredness which comes from close association with human lives and assimilation to the humor of passing years. And then comes the time to lay the restraining hand upon the arm of the hustler ere he play the part of a destroying fiend in the name of modern progress.

It is not infrequently that the soundest philosophy is suggested in a nursery rhyme. It was long ago that we learned that as, idly,

> "Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall
> Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall."

And it may well be remembered that

> "All the King's horses and all the King's men
> Couldn't put Humpty-Dumpty up again."

It was recently remarked, by one who felt deeply upon these matters, that the time had fully arrived for the pulpit to take up the subject and proclaim it the sin that it is, willfully to destroy the natural beauty to which we have become heirs. The pulpit could engage in a very much worse work than this; it would

be safe to say that it often has engaged in very much worse work.

Fortunately, so beneficent is Nature, so long-suffering and lenient to the criminal, however he may treat her, that the hustler never can do damage so great that she is not able in time to throw a veil over it and soften its terrors. But there are some things which nature cannot do, some rents which are beyond repair, and eternal vigilance is called for on the part of the civilized, lest these rents be made before he is aware.

The organization of village improvement societies was a move in the right direction, but the work of these has been allowed in many places to become perfunctory and inefficient. They might well be spurred to greater activity by the dangers now threatening because of the cupidity of some, or of the barbarism of others; and it should be a part of their function to seek to disseminate sound views upon the duty of the citizen in regard to natural beauty.

## XVII

## OPEN SESAME

THE following item has made its appearance in the public prints, purporting to have been copied from a notice put up on the grounds of a well-known public man: "You are welcome. Build no fires, bring no guns, and pull up no flowers by the roots."

As the saying has it, "Si non e vero, e ben trovato." If not true, it ought to be true (though that isn't a literal translation), and the only possible reason for mooting the point is that it is so perfectly sensible and civilized. The text is a most inviting one and I am tempted to take it up after the fashion of an old-time preacher, with firstly, secondly, thirdly, and fourthly, and an "improvement" upon the text as a whole as a snapper. Or to take it after the fashion of a conundrum, as: My first is a benediction; my second is antiphlogiston; my third is bird protection; my fourth is a wise suggestion, and my whole is downright common sense.

When a man lives in the city or even in the immediate suburbs, upon a little seven-by-

nine lot, it is not to be supposed that he has more than enough room to accommodate his personal friends. And it may be necessary to warn these to "please keep off the grass." But when he lives by the seashore, or on the mountains, or even in the plain country, and owns or rents a part of all outdoors, it is quite another matter. Not that his house is not his castle there, just as it is in the city. Not that he can properly be cheated of his privacy there any more than in the city. And not that he is not entitled to supreme control there, subject to the laws of the state, just as he is in the city. But granting all these qualifications, the motto *noblesse oblige* requires of him that he as the owner, renter, or controller should extend to those of his fellow citizens who are themselves civilized and respecters of his rights, all privileges that he can safely afford without depriving himself and his family of the advantages to which they are entitled.

The land-hunger is probably one of the most intense cravings known to human nature, and the private ownership of land has been one of the most potent forces in the advancement of civilization. It is not probable that within the next few thousand years we shall reach a period when any very serious change will take place in this respect in regard to desire or right of ownership. But precisely because such is the case and because some have and others have

not, it is all the more incumbent upon those that have to act generously their part.

We probably do not need any law about it; we have too many laws already. You cannot very well reform the world by law, though you may thereby do away with obstacles and remove some special and unfair privileges. The experience of the past now and then struck out some very happy thoughts, and "Do as you would be done by" is not the least valuable of these. Has it ever occurred to you to consider what would be the total effect upon a community of a general effort to live up to the meaning of this injunction?

I should like to pass a twelvemonth in such a community and observe what should occur.

There are parts of our sea coast where it is already impossible for the person who is not a landowner to obtain a sight of the mighty main. There are extensive districts inland, where the wanderer or even the near neighbor is confined to a dusty road and wholly excluded from the enjoyment of the finest samples of the handiwork of that miracle-worker, Nature. This ought not so to be. In older countries, in addition to the fact that great houses and fine parks are, under certain regulations, thrown open for the enjoyment of the public, there are almost everywhere foot-paths across private domains to which the

public has prescriptive rights, and from the use of which it can, therefore, never be debarred. Such paths might in most instances be allowed here, without interference with the comfort of the proprietors.

Of course this is a matter of use and not of abuse. It remaineth that they that use this world be not as abusing it. If one cannot avail himself properly of privileges, he must be excluded from their enjoyment. But it is most often from lack of experience that abuse creeps in, and I venture to think that a prudent extension of a courteous hospitality would be followed by a rapid development of grateful and thoughtful recognition.

What right, what moral right I mean, not legal right, has any individual to take possession of one of those wondrously lovely spots which Nature with such a lavish hand has scattered over this beautiful world, and seal it up from the enjoyment of others? I might go further and say, by what right shall he so seal up a wonderful work of art? but I forbear. Remember, again, I am not speaking of legal right; I am speaking of right as it is to appear to the conscience of the wholly civilized man, one who has scraped off his war paint, and prepared himself to become a citizen of that kingdom of which we hear so much, but which has curiously enough been left to the preachers to talk about, and is supposed to be a part of

the apparatus of Sunday morning, but which some eccentric people, who may not often be seen in the churches, fancy to be the most practical kingdom that exists, I mean the kingdom of God.

## XVIII

# AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

THE sentiment most generally recognized as elevated and ennobling, and characteristic of the best spirits in the community, is the sentiment that we *are* in some sort our brother's keeper. That there are certain imperative laws of development to which we, alike with all other departments of organic life, are subject, I make no question. That it is easy to attempt unwisely to interfere with the action of these laws, I am as fully assured. But that the human being of to-day has also a deliberate duty to perform, which can only be deduced from his own experience and the experience of the race so far as he is acquainted with it, I am quite as confident.

The cry of the time, as it has been to some extent the cry of other times, is a leveling cry: a demand that the individual be brought beneath the heel of the multitude. Nothing, in my judgment, could be more unfortunate; there is nothing the success of which would seem to me more disastrous. The nugget of

truth upon which this cry is based is, at its best, the assumption that there must be some fact of duty to correspond with the sentiment of helpfulness to which I have referred. I believe that there is such a fact; but in my judgment the deductions drawn therefrom are false, the theories thereon founded are untenable, and the practices proposed would be futile, and destructive of that for the support of which they are sought.

Our knowledge is but an accumulation of facts and deductions drawn from experience. We *know* that progress has been attained through individual initiative, not through compulsory associated action. We know as well that the flower of progress, if we may not indeed more properly say its fruit, is the sense of this duty of common helpfulness. That is, human history points to voluntary and individual action as the source from which general progress arises, and the implement through the use of which it is effected, and from which the altruistic sentiment is born, not to compulsory and corporate action. Its ideal is wise and cheerful co-operation, as diametrically opposed to enforced and tyrannical communism, nationalism, socialism.

Now we are in the midst of the struggle for the mastery between these two theories. While some think that we are approaching nearer and nearer to the actual trial of the

socialist experiment, others believe that the whole movement is based upon certain temporary business or political conditions, and that in a comparatively brief period it will sink into insignificance. Whether the experiment will be tried on any large scale, I do not know: that the movement will soon fade away, I greatly doubt. All the elements of the situation seem to me to point to a period of unrest, lasting many years. It will take long to assimilate the changes in our material conditions that have already been effected: it is not impossible that, within the years just at hand, we shall have to face others as momentous. Should this be the case, undoubtedly all manner of social nostrums will be offered to us, and the wildest schemes will be attempted.

If this be probably so, which is the wiser—to attempt to educate the uninstructed, or to simply stand on the defensive, as those who *have,* and defy the attack? (Some of us who feel thus, alas! have very little, excepting our sense of right, of justice and expediency.) According to my view, it is much the wiser to do what we can to open the eyes that are blind. It may be—it doubtless will be—slow work: it may require line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Even so but little may be effected in changing the attitude of those already committed. But it must be remembered that the vast majority

are not committed, but are simply ignorant, and that ignorance is the hotbed in which errors grow. A little truth will often go a great way in preventing the development of much falsehood.

Supposing that my position is well taken, I think that I may safely follow with the assertion that the only wise way of meeting a dangerous and delusive movement, like that to which I am referring, is with a statement and enforcement of the exact truth, as you apprehend it, not attempting to gloze over any point which may seemingly fit into the theory of your opponent, or to evade allusion to it, but rather emphasizing it in its true relations. So far as your opponents are reasonable, you thus place before them material through the use of which they may revise their conclusions; and so far as your arguments may come before those who are merely unfamiliar with the question, and not yet your opponents, if you have faith in the power of the truth, you should be quite content to leave them to draw their own conclusions. I thoroughly believe that there exists a responsibility of ownership which is not adequately realized, and that this needs to be clearly set before those whom it most nearly touches. On the other hand, the maddest propositions are gravely advocated by writers who should know better, and eagerly accepted by readers who also should know

better, but who never will know better unless some effort be made to place the truth before them by those who recognize the fact that they are, as I have said, in a certain sense, and so far as their power to aid may go, their brother's keeper. Let us take our stand upon the immutable laws of progress and the impregnability of the truth; be not swerved from our conviction of the solidarity of the race, and that its welfare is bound up with and is at one with the eternal universe, if the universe be eternal, and if it be not, with whatever *may* be the eternal, and "God save the right."

## XIX

## IN THE HEART OF THE STORM

UNDERLEDGE forms an ideal point of vantage from which to watch the progress of a summer or a winter storm. You will remember that on the south, southwest, and west, the view is bordered by the edge of the mountain meadow, with a picturesque fringe of trees far enough away to give a good view of the sky, and with here and there a loophole through which one can just catch sight of the hills toward Forestville: in front, over a sloping line of maples on the High Street, which are ideally beautiful in the autumn, there are tiny glimpses of the valley, and beyond these of the narrow passage through which the Tunxis makes its way from the rugged country about New Hartford, and still further, the Burlington Mountain and the higher hills receding toward "Satan's Kingdom"; while to the northward, seen over the picturesque pasture and charming grassy slopes, stretches the beautiful intervale, with its bits of rich farming land, and long and broad masses of what seems interminable

forest to the Barn-door Hills, the portal of the valley, through which, when the atmosphere is clear, as now, we look far beyond to the mountains of central Massachusetts.

Somewhat farther to the eastward the bold slopes of the Talcott Range front the westering sun, breaking down into lesser hills, toward the Paul Spring; and behind the cottage only, the ledge with its rich drapery of evergreen and oak and ash and chestnut, through which the sky gleams in infinitesimal patches, closes the view, eighty or a hundred yards away.

On Saturday it rained. It rained, and then again it rained. It poured. It came in floods. it lightened, and it thundered. Oh, how it thundered! It so happened that about noon I was sitting upon the veranda, writing,—not an uncommon occurrence,—and for my own amusement I noted in careful detail the appearance of the landscape under the existing and constantly changing atmospheric conditions.

The weather during the morning had been "open and shut," which proverbially forebodes rain, and it has the further advantage that it is provocative of some of the most lovely effects that Dame Nature ever vouchsafes. At times the distant hills lose themselves in the pale blue haze, which advances well into the foreground. So was it that morning. I noticed a curious circumstance, however, which I am

quite unable to explain or understand. In the middle distance, perhaps eight miles away, against a background of dark green wood, stands the great house of my dainty little English neighbor near Weatogue. It is usually quite visible when the air is clear, especially while the sun is in the south, but I never before saw it so clearly as on Saturday. It shone as if it had just been presented with a fresh summer suit. That this should have been the case under the hazy condition of the atmosphere is singular.

The changes in such weather as this are kaleidoscopic. A ray of sunlight passes athwart the valley, lighting here and there a farmhouse, a bit of fertile meadow, a noble tree. Now the valley and nearer hills lie shrouded, and through the haze the sun-lighted heights on the horizon gleam softly like the Delectable Mountains of a different world. Anon the haze lifts and the sun is veiled by a great dark cloud overspreading the west: the horizon line comes out clear and strong, the hills are of an intense blue against the lighter tone of the clouded sky.

The great dark cloud rises and spreads. I watch heavy showers chasing one after another along Burlington Mountain and across the gorge at Unionville and by Avon and Simsbury and around the bold headland of the Talcott Mountain. Occasionally a bit of

vapory fringe trails across our slope, leaves us a few pearly drops, and then climbs the heights beyond.

This lasted well through the afternoon. The prolific mother of storms sat still in the west and sent out her brood one by one, flashing and grumbling and occasionally uttering a harsher note, but following each the beaten track up through the valley. Sometimes the first note of the thunder sounded nearly in front, and then, reverberating from cloud to cloud, it would roll far up the valley and die in the distance after lasting nearly or quite half a minute, which is a long time when you come to measure it.

In attempting to describe them in detail, I found the changes so sudden and frequent that, rapid writer as I am, it was impossible for me to keep up with them. It was approaching five o'clock in the afternoon when the serious business began. Another scion of the same family made its appearance in the west, of more robust port and sterner visage. Its motion was steady and rapid, and instead of following the others northward through the valley, it marched steadily across and seemed to be coming on the wings of a violent wind.

The veil grew thicker and thicker over the hills and shrouded in turn the objects in the valley. At length I hear the falling shower at the foot of the meadow; now it climbs the

hill—it reaches the lawn—it strikes the roof. But there is no wind at the surface of the ground, or but the gentlest breeze.

The storm was fairly upon us, and for two hours it seemed to center in a shallow depression two or three thousand feet south of Underledge, and rock to and fro, unable to find an exit. It was magnificent, but it was awful in the strictest sense. The rain, at first rather gentle but decided, and leaving no room for doubt that it was a bona-fide rain, grew heavier and heavier until we could almost imagine it to be what they call in the West a "cloud-burst," and with slight fluctuations this continued for considerably over an hour. Meantime, we were under fire from all Heaven's artillery. The flashes followed quickly one upon another, sometimes several in succession, before there came from them the first peal of thunder, and yet these followed so rapidly, crash upon crash, that it seemed that we were in the very heart of the storm. Underneath was the steady, subdued roar of the falling rain—an obbligato accompaniment —that sounded like the rumble of a distant train.

Sometimes the flashes were from cloud to cloud, but oftenest they fell almost perpendicularly from the clouds to the earth, and were vivid until they were lost behind the thick foliage. Two or three hundred yards

below me on the hill-side a bolt struck a neighbor's barn, and the proverbial "ball of fire" passed between him and a friend, they being within the barn. How utterly weak and impotent one feels in the presence of such supreme and resistless power! Man's boasted strength is but as the breath of a moth against Niagara. We can but quietly yield ourselves to a force which none can control, and await the issue.

At length the flashes of light and crashes of sound are perceived no longer over the valley, but seem to be retiring to the south-eastward. Suddenly for a moment the clouds part slightly in the west, and the sun peers through. It is but for a moment, and the rain still falls heavily. Less and less heavily, however, it falls; the clouds become more broken in the west; lines of light stretch across the intervale; the storm is past.

Peace! The sunlight glistens on the blades of the grass and on its fringy tops which gently bow before the light wind. And through and over them, hither and thither wing their way innumerable yellow butterflies. What pure souls are these that seem to have been born of the storm?

## XX

# CHEATING THE EYES

I HAVE just made a notable discovery. It may have been made a score of times before, but it is wholly new to me, and I doubt not will be new to nearly all, if not quite all, of my readers.

I am sitting on my veranda with my eyes about eight or nine feet distant from the rustic railing which incloses it. In looking through the railing at the slender birch trees at the end of the lawn, I discovered a moment ago that when one of them was directly behind one of the balusters (these being slightly less in diameter than the distance between my eyes) I could see it with greater distinctness, and make out the details more readily than I could under other circumstances. This fact was so surprising that I tried the experiment over and over again, with the same result. On making repeated trials upon other objects I found a similar effect, but not expressed so definitely. The increased clearness, though unmistakable, is not so considerable but that to make absolutely sure of it one must observe with care; but when the contrasts are great, as

upon the white stems of the birches as compared with the markings upon them, or with the surrounding objects, it becomes unequivocal.

It is well known that a small hole in a shutter or other screen may be used without a lens as a camera, and will give a very good image in a dark room. I have even heard of photographs having been taken with such an improvised instrument. Again, it is a common practice to use the hand closed as nearly as may be into a cylinder as a spying tube, when we wish to see into the distance more distinctly, or in reading when we are so unfortunate as to find ourselves bereft of the spectacles or eye-glasses with which, by a singular and happy dispensation of bountiful nature, middle-aged persons so frequently find themselves endowed.

By the way, is it not probable that to this endowment perhaps more largely than to anything else is to be traced that increased longevity in the human race characteristic of modern times? (I am not comparing with the figures of the Pentateuch.) If in former days sight were subject to the same vicissitudes as at present, activities which can now be continued at will through the years of a long life must have been laid aside as wholly impracticable at an early age, with all the inevitable consequent depression and distancing in

the race for a subsistence, to say nothing of comfort and enjoyment.

My theory in regard to the phenomenon which I have described is that it is due in some manner to the principle of the diaphragm. It is as if I deceived my eyes by a subterfuge, and obtained the benefit of the deceit, as, under the tutelage of his crafty mother, the dutiful Jacob did through the sense of touch. I seem to say to myself, "Now I am looking through a narrow aperture between two edges—such being the case, report to me what you find before you." For you will observe, if you try a similar experiment, that while you are adjusting the focus of your eyes to the object which you wish to inspect, and intermittently while you are inspecting it, you are conscious of two images of the intervening object, between which you appear to be looking.

While speaking of optical phenomena I might refer to another circumstance which may also be perfectly familiar. I do not recall having ever heard it mentioned, though I have a vague recollection of having seen it stated somewhere, that the center of the retina becomes fatigued, seared as it were, after long use, and loses sensitiveness. However this may be, frequent observation through many years has made it clear to me that if I desire to see an object which is extremely indistinct,

especially, for example, upon a dark night, I can frequently do so by looking a little to one side of it, and catching it, if I may say so, on the margin of the retina, although I cannot see a vestige of it when looking directly toward it. I think that after a little practice others will discover this to be so, if they observe carefully.

## XXI

## AN IMPRESSION

UNDER the inspiration of a strong breeze from the south the æolian harp at the window has to-day been singing almost constantly, and with inexpressible sweetness—sweetness, that is, which I cannot express: from the lowest murmurs to the highest tone which it can reach: breathing such acute longings, plaints, and reveries, as pierce one to the very marrow. If parting be "such sweet sorrow," what shall we say of music like unto this?

> "I am never merry when I hear sweet music,"

says Jessicá, and merriment seems as far as the antipodes from the emotion produced when listening to this minstrel. Yet it makes one crave companionship—crave something in the way of a refuge from this intense insistence upon the underlying pathos of life.

This is one of the days when it seems as foolish to think of the world about us as without a real poignant life as to think so of ourselves. One is not always conscious of this feeling about the world. Sometimes it seems

inert: simply the *scene* of operations. To-day it is wholly different: it is all instinct with life. The framework is palpitating: vegetation is luxuriant: the trees are masses of heavy and healthy foliage: the fields are teeming with richness in everything that grows. Butterflies flutter here and there: the air is full of the songs of birds, of the chirp and whir of insects: grass and blossom and shrub and tree tumble and toss, and wave in each tingling leaf, and respond in murmurs to the solicitation of the breeze: while the spirit finds its perfect utterance in the voice of the harp, in which throbs the very heart-beat of life—in which are concentrated all the tides which ebb and flow through the sentient world.

The tiniest growing sprays curve and spring in the passing breeze, with motion incessant and incalculable. It would seem as if they must be torn and crushed into nothingness, yet is this a part of the very making of their lives, which could not endure without it. Not a moment are they still. The leaves flutter and flutter in the wind, their petioles yielding, bending and rebounding, the cells elongating and contracting, working upon and among each other, almost as part of a moving fluid.

> "That strain again! It had a dying fall:
> Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odor."

The whole problem of the world and of life breathes in it. I listen with awe and with wonder: with awe at that which is, and with both awe and wonder at that which may be.

For a moment it is silent. Then, far off, I hear a single tone, a soft and gentle murmur. It fades to the most attenuated essence of sound: then rises, and into it glide other tones until the chord is full, and a great peal rings out—a peal of triumph, or a shriek of despair. Anon a gentler tone makes itself heard beneath; the peal sinks lower and lower; little by little the harmony is unraveled until it dies away, a plaintive wail or sob which is but a divine breath.

It is interesting, but can hardly be accounted singular, that so large a proportion of its intervals are in the minor mode. It continually recurs to and repeats with persistency the sixth, but lays less stress upon the third, and only occasionally falls upon and rests firmly on the tonic. It sings the psalm of life, with its aspirations ever unfulfilled, but making music of its pain, and enriching the world with its unsatisfied longings.

## XXII

# MY SCULPTORS

WE are so new, in this New-England—in "The New World." It doesn't seem to make any difference that our Laurentian rocks are a part of the very core of the earth, and sisters of the Alps and the Apennines. We ourselves are but of yesterday, and the varnish is not yet dry in which we try to see our reflection, if, haply, varnish there be. It is true that we have already greatly altered the surface of the country, I trust not always for the worse. But the alterations so far are more indicative of vigor than of sentiment.

And now, as we halt a little in the breathless struggle to get ahead, we suddenly realize that there has been a life before ours, the roots of which go far down into the past; a life of joy and of sorrow, of suffering, of struggle, and of aspiration; and we feel an indistinct craving to grasp a little more strongly the importance of the long sweep, and to lay less stress upon the incidental material contest in which we are at present engaged. And we begin to seek for something which is not

walls of our simpler cottages, and tied together with a cement which assumes a tone in perfect keeping with them, and we find ourselves possessed of a substructure which at least is not fraudulent, and which justifies itself by its harmonious agreement with its surroundings.

Then, above, the unpainted shingles—give them but a little time—yield without violence to the solicitation of the sun and the rain, the wind and the fogs, and, month by month, and year by year, mellow and ripen into the soft bluish or silvery gray which is akin to the walls which they surmount.

Occasionally, though not often, one like myself has ventured still further in the search after the harmonious and the picturesque, combined with the stable, and in building the porches or verandas so essential to comfort in this climate, has used the trunks and branches of the red cedar or savin tree, *Juniperus Virginiana*, which is so common, and which has very tough and exceedingly durable wood.

And this long prelude brings me to the subject of my sketch. Under the rather loose shreddy bark of the dead cedar is the favorite burrowing place of a gray worm or grub, about a third or half an inch in length. These worms, in countless numbers, form my corps of sculptors. Their function is to channel the surface of the wood in an immense variety of

intricate and very beautiful patterns, and they do it with an unfailing grace and patience which an Oriental artist might not rival.

Their bolder work has much the character of Saracenic decoration, and in some cases it seems as if one familiar with the symbols should be able to interpret the arabesques, and reveal the story which has been recorded. On a finely curved limb which forms the balustrade upon one side of the steps to my front porch, which was found finished and stripped upon a dead and weather-beaten tree beyond the ledge, it seems as if an artist from the Alhambra itself had been at work, and I am sure that if I could read it, I should find there quaint and romantic tales of Boabdil and the Abencerages. Wherever the bark has been left sufficiently long, the whole surface is diapered in wandering lines which seem to have a definite significance. Elsewhere the style of the work affects that of the Aztecs, or that of the Japanese, and frequently the tracery is more delicate, often taking a butterfly shape, a straight body in intaglio, with radiating lines upon each side forming the wings, falling into or crossed by wandering curves which bind the whole together. Here and there appear minute perforations into the depths of the wood, from which, while the work continues, the débris is ejected in powder like the finest sawdust.

## XXIV

## KITTIWINK

PERMIT me to introduce to you Kittiwink, the direct successor of the deposed and suppressed Titus Andronicus. Just at the present writing he is sitting on the desk before me, with both paws upon my left hand, but what is true of him at one moment is not apt to be true of the next. For example, having completed my sentence, I find him cuddled down against my hand, with the fore part of his body upon the sheet of paper, and his head about three inches away from my pen. I think that he has closed his eyes, which are turned away from me, and determined to take a nap, for ordinarily, as soon as I begin to write, down goes his paw upon the point of my pen, so concealing the paper from me and making writing rather difficult, while not greatly aiding composition.

He has great times in the pigeon holes of my desk, not showing due respect to the lucubrations of genius there stored, but, in fact, rather inclined to make sport of them. He does not usually "stay put" longer than about "half a shake," at the end of which time he

either has the end of my penhandle in his mouth or is smearing the ink about at its point and transferring it so as to make autographs of Horace Greeley upon another sheet.

I think that Kitty is about four weeks old come some time or other in the future. He has now ruled the mansion for ten or twelve days, and most of my garments bear testimony to the fact in the fringed and tasselated appearance which they show because of his sharp talons. For he seems to be under the impression that my legs are intended as a sort of inverted toboggan slide, up which it is great fun to go at such speed as the fates permit, more or less successfully, according to the depth to which said talons penetrate. It does not much matter whether I am at my desk or at the table, the performance is always in order. He discovered the beauties of this diversion while I was at my first meal after his arrival, and it took him very few seconds to reach my shoulders. When he is lazy he just snuggles down against the back of my neck and goes to sleep, but it cannot be said that he is often lazy. Usually he finds it much pleasanter to reach around with his paw and catch at my whiskers, or to rasp my ear with his tongue, or to chew and claw at my back hair. He does not molest that upon my forehead and the top of my cranium, for obvious reasons. When, as occasionally happens, his ascent is impeded by

a long tablecloth resting against my knees and making for him the sign, "No thoroughfare," he quietly succumbs and curls around and goes to sleep at the point to which he happens to have attained. I suppose that to him it is something like passing the night at the Grands Mulets.

If I could think it quite possible for a feline creature to form positive and disinterested attachments, I should believe that he was really fond of me, for he welcomes me in the morning and follows me from room to room as a dog might, and seems always happier when somewhere about my person. His capacity for fun is absolutely unlimited, and a life of joking seems the normal condition of his existence. He is quite conscious that his teeth and claws are becoming long and sharp, and he makes free use of them, testing carefully how much I will bear, taking hold of my finger, for example, and squinting up at me, or laying his ears back while he holds it with a certain grip, waiting to see what I will say. When he becomes a little too free in the use of his weapons I box his ears, and he understands just as well, and I think a little better than a small human, what I mean by it.

If it were not for the humor and the superabounding vitality of a kitten, one would be disposed to think that the domestic cat had become in large measure a parasite, living upon

members of the human race. But I imagine after all that we must esteem it an animal possessed of the largest possible capacity for appreciating comfort, an animal to which comfort has become the one supreme essential of existence, to be followed after with whomsoever it is to be found, without respect to persons.

I have heard it said that there are females of the human race (*Homo felis, fem.*), a purring, cuddling kind, having precisely the same characteristics. Was not Manon Lescaut one of these? Poor Manon! How wholly uncongenial it was to her to have a bad quarter of an hour anywhere! She had a Puritan conscience, turned inside out, and the pattern did not come through to the other side.

On Sunday last Kittiwink had a new experience. On Sunday morning we had a sharp hoarfrost. The atmosphere was as clear as a bell, and every object scintillated under the brilliant sunshine. But the cold wind from the north sent a chill to the bones, for only four days earlier we had recorded the highest temperature of the year. Therefore I heaped wood upon the broad fireplace and soon had a sparkling, blazing, crackling fire casting a warm glow over the study. Puss had never seen such a thing before, and his antics were very amusing. Fortunately the screen prevented him from reaching it, or I

doubt not we should in about two minutes have had a generous distribution of the burning stuff over the floor of the study. As it was, he had to content himself with running to and fro and poking his nose against the screen, scampering off, and quickly returning to reach after the fire with his paws.

And how genially the world smiled as the flames arose! The spirit of comfort seized me also, and I resigned myself to an easy-chair, and the companionship of Stevenson in his charming "Inland Voyage." And there I came across such a comfortable sentence! "It is a commonplace that we cannot answer for ourselves before we have been tried. But it is not so common a reflection, and surely more consoling, that we usually find ourselves a great deal braver and better than we thought."

Now I am going to confess that I am an arrant coward. The students from —— College intimate that this is because I never indulged in the divine game of football—never had a one-hundred-and-fifty-pounder jump upon my back, and never jumped upon the back of anyone else, or even knocked him down and sat on his head. They say that until this amusement came into vogue the people of the world were a set of milksops, and were it to cease to be practiced, they would deteriorate into jellyfish. This is probably so. I can see that had I had these advantages I might be sitting up o'

nights, bravely preparing to make round holes in the dun deer's hide by the light of a pine torch, or be getting up in the chill of the morning and valiantly yanking out of the pearly water delicate speckled trout, all shining and sparkling in the first rays of the dawn, and then ingeniously stringing them upon a forked stick. But, oh! how they would wriggle!

Ah! how I wish that I were a brave man like one of these! Instead of that, I have to stand (or sit) revealed inanely watching the gambols of Kittiwink, or warming my superficies before an open wood fire, and in spirit accompanying the lamented Robert Louis Stevenson as he gently meanders over the bosom of the Oise, idly counting the strokes of his paddle and fearing lest he should remember the hundreds.

And then I recall for my consolation the sentence which I have quoted above. And I read how he says: "I wish sincerely, for it would have saved me much trouble, there had been someone to put me in a good heart about life when I was younger; to tell me how dangers are more portentous on a distant sight; and how the good in a man's spirit will not suffer itself to be overlaid, and rarely or never deserts him in the hour of need." And as I pass out at the door and look upon the distant hills, blue-green, and clear-cut against

the lighter sky—as I see the leaves still pulsing with sap, and incessantly moving as though full of life, as, indeed, they are—as I listen to the crickets and other insects filling the air with their chirping by day as by night, I feel that somehow we are all tied together, and that it is very pleasant not to be at war; but that, perhaps, if war must come, FitzJames, with his back against a rock, might find himself all right after all, even though he had not been brought up to feed upon raw Englishman.

# XXV

# MY SPORTING COLUMN

## I

I HAVE often heard housekeepers express a strong desire for the invention of a new animal by means of which they might add to their repertoire of viands for the table. We are all familiar with the schoolboy's choice of meats—ram, lamb, sheep, and mutton. There is certainly monotony in this, but even the more extended bill of fare which is supplied on ordinary boards leaves something to be desired, according to the housewife.

In like manner there are those upon whom the familiar entertainments of life sometimes pall. To them existence becomes flat, stale, and unprofitable, and, like Alexander, they crave yet other worlds to conquer. I am about to present to these an inestimable boon, a new form of sport—the adventurous chase after flying game.

I do not believe that it has ever occurred to you what possibilities there are in the wasp. I mean the real wasp, the paper wasp, *Polistes*

*rubiginosus,* if that is his favorite name; not any of your milk-and-water "digger" wasps. These may be interesting in their way, but they are not exciting. But the paper wasp—ah! I approached him at first with hesitation and awe. I discovered him about a fortnight ago. He had built a few nests upon the under side of the roof in the loft, and was very properly and industriously engaged in raising a large and promising family. He appeared in considerable numbers, and being myself yet ignorant of the rules of the sport, I did not know how to handle him. Possibly, however, the method which I adopted was not so bad after all.

I might have burned down the cottage, but this did not seem wise. After mature deliberation, I fastened to the end of a piece of bamboo a tin funnel, the tube of which I had stopped with cotton. Taking another wad of cotton, I soaked it thoroughly with chloroform, and placed it in the funnel; and then, by a rapid movement, surrounded my prey, pressing the funnel firmly against the roof. After holding the apparatus there long enough, as it seemed to me, to cause vertigo upon the part of the victims, I scraped off the nest, and killed the half-dazed occupants one by one.

This, I thought, was the end of the matter; but no. Since then, morning and night, I have visited the precincts at the top of the

house, and night and morning I have found new members of the tribe gathered on the under side of the skylight or upon the window in the gable. And then came the excitement of the chase. There are various ways in which it can be prosecuted. I have found a yardstick and a portière rod both useful, each in its appropriate place. If your aim is good you may hit the fellow at the first shot and bring him to the floor and then dispatch him at your leisure. If, however, your glasses deceive you (and glasses are endowed with a certain depravity), you may strike just upon one side, whereupon your intended victim will make a rush as quick as thought, and where he will take you you do not know until the time comes. Then you step back quickly and find yourself just an inch and a half from the scuttle-way. These are the interesting incidents of the chase, but when you become skillful they are limited in number. I have been stung twice; once upon the finger, when no wasp was visible—this was by a sort of surplus sting which was lying around loose somewhere; the other time on the cheek, on which occasion, by a sudden brush of my hand, I prevented the sting from going deep, there not being enough cheek to hold it firmly, and at the same time flung my spectacles down into the second story, thus entailing on their part a three-days' visit to the city.

The bedrooms have also proved a fruitful hunting ground. The favorite spot there is a narrow space between the ceiling and a molding over the dormer windows. One evening I bagged fifteen in a single room, and I never have wholly failed of some success for twenty-four hours. But the game is becoming scarce. That is because I have not encouraged it, but rather the contrary. My skill has not really increased, and I feel that my methods too nearly resemble those of the boy who uses worms for bait. I am too uniformly successful. I am dispirited, like the young woman whose shopping expedition was a failure because she found what she asked for at the very first shop that she entered. But I am sure that the sport can be so managed as to prevent the extinction of the game and to maintain the interest of the chase.

Indeed, it is a handy game for all classes. But if there is anyone to whom it must come as a positive delight, it is to the three hundred ninety and nine, or whatever may be the proper number at this particular date. Just think of it as an entertainment in country houses in —— or elsewhere. And in rainy weather it would be invaluable both for men and women. It could be so conducted as to involve a considerable amount of risk; I could indicate several ways in which this could be done. And I am sure that tackle could be

invented by which the game could be kept in torment—"played," as it were, for a long period. As it is, it has more lives than a cat, and wriggles as vigorously and more vindictively than a fish.

The sport could also be transferred to the city, and I think, by proper adjustments of heating apparatus, it could be managed that there should be no "close" season. And as to the danger of an exhaustion of the supply, I am satisfied that this need not be feared. The supply depends upon the demand, and breeders would soon arise, ready to furnish all that could be required, and at a moderate price.

I am in hopes that nothing more will be needed than these few words to further the introduction and prosecution of this most attractive sport.

## XXVI

## MY SPORTING COLUMN

### II

WHAT an extremely thin veneer civilization is, after all, whether in cats or in kings! It is true that my recent experience in cats (for Kittiwink is but new) has been limited mainly to one—Titus Andronicus—now, alas! no longer an inhabitant of this sphere, at least in the particular form in which I knew him. What metempsychosic form he may have taken (if one may be pardoned such an expression) I cannot say. But as a cat, Titus is no more.

I was disappointed in Titus, but I should not have been. No kind maiden aunt had ever presided over his childish frolics, or taught him the gentle habits befitting a domestic cat. As I have elsewhere said, his babyhood was spent in a barn—not a bad place, by the way, in which to have a good time, but a place, nevertheless, where bad habits may be acquired.

At an early age he was transferred to

Underledge, and there duly installed, with two servants wholly at his disposal, Hickory Ann and myself. For six months we were at his beck and call. All that we could do for him he accepted without embarrassment, but he gave little in return. His one great enjoyment was to lie out in the sun, and whenever he was approached to stretch himself at full length and rub against anything that was handy, saying that he was ready to be stroked: yes, he experienced one greater pleasure; to be lifted up from the floor by his tail, and allowed to fall upon his feet. This was a source of unfailing delight, and always resulted in a demand for an encore.

Titus was well brought up. He lived upon the fat of the land. He had a fair variety in his menu, and I had no reason to suppose that he was dissatisfied with his board.

He should have realized that I wanted the poultry for my own use. But I missed many plump chickens, and one day, happening to pass by that way, and hearing a great commotion in the flock, I espied Titus speeding toward the wood with a handsome little fledgeling in his mouth. I followed him under the trees, but sought him in vain. Some time later he was seen entering the house licking his chops, with an expression of great contentment upon his countenance. And so Titus was doomed.

My experience in kings is less, if anything,

than my experience in cats. At Underledge we are all stanch republicans, and when any kings come along they are sent incontinently to the tramp-house. We keep them in seclusion, and this allows full play to our imaginations.

But if we do not know so much about kings as we might, we know about the rest of mankind, *nous autres,* and we notice some curious things.

Once upon a time, I saw this as in a vision. It was in a forest glade, and

> "The murmuring pines and the hemlocks,
> Bearded with moss, and in garments green,"

cast a brooding shade over the sloping banks. The sunlight fell flickering between the leaves, and sparkled upon the moss, and upon the goldenrod and the asters with which it was sprinkled. Not far away a woodthrush piped in clear ringing tones; in front, a broad brook, which had just fallen over ragged rocks, tarried for a moment to rest in a deep pool from which the sunlight was broadly reflected, and then launched forward with ever-increasing speed, to hurry faster and faster, down, down among the fragments of hard granite, here and there worn smooth by the clear, foaming water. Between the tree-tops beyond the brook, the blue sky seemed palpitating with light, while now and again a white, fleecy

cloud floated lazily across the opening, as soft as thistle-down. Over the water hovered an ichneumon fly, Psyche, or some other winged thing, and sometimes for a moment the nose of a trout would appear above the surface, to be followed immediately by a splash, as with a quick curve it darted away, its tail flashing in the sunlight. It was doubtless following some insect, and probably carried it down with it. The leaves gently rustled in the slight breeze, and save this and the singing of the birds, the voice of the stream and the chirping of the insects, no sound fell upon the ear.

Upon this sylvan scene, strolling leisurely up the brook, for they had just eaten heartily, came two young men. One, whose botanical name was Homo Venator, was tall and broad-shouldered, his features were good, and his form indicated strength and vigor. He carried a gun on his shoulder. Stepping aside from something which lay in his path, he quoted from him whom the English call "Cooper,"

> "I would not enter on my list of friends
> (Though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense
> Yet wanting sensibility) the man
> Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

"Yet," said the other "you will find men even in our own set, with no delicacy of feeling in such matters."

"True," said the first "but no one of fine breeding could voluntarily expose himself to the danger of being a witness of frequent scenes of cruelty."

"Apropos,—how in the world could anyone voluntarily take up the occupation of a butcher?" said the other.

"Ugh! disgusting! Don't suggest it. It almost makes me sick to think of the things now hanging in camp," replied the first.

His companion, Homo Piscator, was of medium height, with well-knit frame, and firm and elastic step. He carried in his hand a long and slender rod, fully equipped with line and sharp-barbed hook of glossy blue steel. His features were delicate and refined, his eye was clear and intelligent. For a moment he looked around upon the quiet scene and seemed to drink in a deep draught of the balmy air.

"Did you ever see a more perfect and harmonious picture?" said he.

His friend made no reply, for none was needed. To add epithets to the scene before them would be to paint the lily.

While Venator seated himself in the shade with his back to a splendid pine, Piscator took his stand upon the rocky bank, and opening a tin box which hung at his side, selected from a writhing tangle of such, a red worm two or three inches in length. This he proceeded to

thread upon the sharp hook, running the point through it here and there in such a manner as to keep it impaled securely, but not to kill it, the worm meantime squirming and lashing itself about, stretching out to its utmost length, and then retracting until its segments were crowded into the closest possible contact. For does not Izaak Walton say: "Put your hook into him somewhat above the middle, and out again a little below the middle; having so done, draw the worm above the arming of your hook; but note that at the entering of your hook it must not be at the head-end of the worm, but at the tail-end of him, that the point of your hook may come out toward the head-end, and, having drawn him above the arming of your hook, then put the point of your hook again into the very head of the worm, till it come near to the place where the point of the hook first came out; and then draw back that part of the worm that was above the shank or arming of your hook, and so fish with it."

He did this work deftly, "gently, as if he loved it," and the worm remained wound about the hook, as the serpents remain twined about Laocoön and his sons in the marble group, but not motionless as they; it still continued to writhe and twist under his satisfied and admiring glance, as he dropped it into the quiet pool.

Hardly had it disappeared when, with a dash, a fish caught and shot away with it, the slender rod bending as the line bore down upon it. To and fro the fish darted across the pool, the rod springing and swaying as Piscator followed and guided it here and there, with set face and eyes intent. Tired at length with the unequal contest, it permitted itself to be led across toward the nearer bank, and then, by a dextrous twitch of the rod and line, to be lifted from the water and thrown over into a safe depression in the earth, where it curved and flounced in the hot sunlight, trying to release itself from the hook. This, however, was impossible, for it had passed through the gills, in which the barb was firmly fixed, and blood was flowing from a ragged wound.

The fisherman removed it with usual care, merely tearing through the gills, and, after weighing the fish in his hand with an approving smile, tossed it back into the depression, where it resumed its dance of death. He then readjusted the bait. It was nearly all there, one end only having been torn away, and it was perhaps even more animated than before, judging from the manner in which it twisted and turned upon the hook. He therefore dropped it again into the water.

For a time his line hung motionless, while the denizens of the pool were recovering from

the alarm caused by the recent disturbance. The eyes of the fisherman were called from time to time to the trout just caught, which now flung itself into the air, and now lay stretched at length upon the ground, smirched with dust and bits of broken leaves and twigs, and laboriously gasping for breath. A pull upon the line recalled his attention. It lasted but a moment, and again all was still. Then another, and a stronger jerk, and the line ran across the pool, but again became motionless. A third pull, and then a twitch of the elastic rod, and a second fish dropped beside the first, its hold being upon the bait alone. The fish previously caught was agitated anew by the fall of the later comer, and feebly flopped about, but its bright eyes were becoming glazed, and its motions were weak.

The bait had now been torn to shreds, and only a tattered fragment of a red worm, with hardly life enough in it to enable it to move, remained attached to the hook. This Piscator removed with his fingers, and in its place he put a fresh one, disentangled from the writhing mass in the box, and the hook, with its twirling and twisting decoration, was again dropped into the water.

Meantime the silence had been unbroken save as before and by the slight additional rustle caused by the intermittent tossing of the two fish, one of which now only at long in-

tervals made a convulsive turn. And it was but the snapping of a slender branch that caused the man with the gun to raise his eyes and see a lithe-limbed deer, with soft, round eyes, poke its head through the bushes some fifty yards away, and approach the water. Such breeze as there was blew toward the men, and the beast seemed quite unconscious of any observer. Advancing confidently to the brookside, it dropped its muzzle into the water to slake its thirst.

As the cool and refreshing liquid filled its throat, a sharp report startled the forest. The deer made one leap into the air, and fell upon the bank, its shoulder broken by the ball. At the same moment the frightened wood-thrush fled from the glen, and all was silence.

Venator sprang forward, and made his way across the brook to the spot where the beast was lying, struggling impotently to regain its feet, and with a pathetic appeal in its great eyes. Stooping over it he drew a sharp knife across its throat, and a stream of bright red blood spurted upon the mossy bank and flowed out into the clear water.

There were as many creatures as before. Some of them were merely dead. And the men were happy.

What is it that the French quote the English as saying? "It is a fine day; let's go and kill something."

And who was that man—either of them? "*Cet homme, c'était Tartarin, Tartarin de Tarascon, l'intrépide, le grand, l'incomparable Tartarin de Tarascon.*"

## XXVII

## AN IRIDESCENT DREAM

WHAT a mistake it is to permit yourself to be caught in the company of those who really know that which you only seem to know! I am not sure that this misfortune happens more frequently to the man of letters than it does to other members of the community, but it certainly is not an uncommon occurrence with him, and it is sufficiently disagreeable.

Just look at the situation. The literary artist gets hold of the fag end of an idea out of which he thinks something can be made, and, an idea being a valuable article, and not too common, he naturally cherishes it and exploits it to the best of his ability. Before him are his foamy suds, and, like the late Tityrus T. Patchouli, procumbent under the wide-spreading beech tree, he prepares and plays a pretty tune upon his pipe, as Mr. Patchouli in praise of the lovely Ama Ryllis. His pipe, however, is not made of those flexible reeds the swaying and bending of which in the waters of the Oise brought such somber mus-

ings to Stevenson. No—it is a plain dudeen, or at most a clay pipe, which has the making of a dudeen in it, and only needs a fall upon the ground to perfect it.

And he does his work with care. His idea is but a breath, a Geiſt, an inspiration as it were, but he gives it a gorgeous housing. He blows gently upon his pipe—neither too strongly nor yet too weakly, but with a steady current, as if his dudeen were a blowpipe, and he were making an analysis of the heart of a coquette. Do you remember what Addison said of a coquette's heart?

"We laid it into a pan of burning coals, when we observed in it a certain Salamandrine quality, that made it capable of living in the midst of fire and flame, without being consumed or so much as singed."

But he is engaged in no such invidious occupation; he is simply contributing his mite to the gayety of nations. And, as he blows, his microcosm takes form—a tiny globe, all his own, proudly swelling as he breathes into it the breath of life. At first it appears but as a simple translucent ball, rather dense and colorless, but showing latent possibilities. And he blows, and the ball expands, and upon its shining surface he begins to find echoes of the universe, a bit of light here, and a bit of shadow there, with men as trees walking, all a little dreamy, it may be, characterized

by a certain spherical aberration, but very "fetching" withal. And as he blows, and the sphere still enlarges, the lights and shadows become more distinct, and the figures take on more dignified and graceful forms, and assume gradually the hues that float in the heavenly bow, or lie treasured in the pearl. And anon these tints deepen into a chromatic glory and revolve upon the inflated globe, which mirrors all the world clad in an ineffable firelight:

> "The light that never was, on sea or land;
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream."

And then, his task completed, with a dexterous sweep of his pipe he sets free his master work, that new world which is a sort of apotheosis of the old. It is all true, but perhaps it is not all the truth.

> "She was a phantom of delight
> When first she gleamed upon my sight,
> A lovely apparition, sent
> To be a moment's ornament."

And Zephyrus generously takes it in his arms and bears it aloft, all glorious in the light of the golden day, and the people clap their hands, and not only rejoice, as they should, at the vision of beauty which they see before them, but imagine that the piper is a

dictionary of the fine arts and a compendium of human knowledge. And they ask him all sorts of questions, and he is compelled to discover that his ears have become so attuned to ethereal harmonies that they cannot perceive grosser sounds, or to plead another engagement.

Then, perhaps, there comes along the uncomfortable individual to whom I alluded in the beginning, the one that really knows it, and this is the most unkindest cut of all. And he also thinks that the artist knows it all, and very courteously makes a casual remark about something with which, of course, the latter is perfectly familiar (but which he never heard of in his life), to which he replies with an interrogative "Yes?" not knowing what else to say; or the newcomer asks him a question or two, and the artist, having no life preserver about his person, and being unable to plead an alibi, gently, sweetly, and modestly says that he doesn't know. And so it goes on, and he seems to see the point of the needle entering into his bubble, and has a feeling that the whole affair will go off in a flash, and that nothing will remain but a tiny drop of soapsuds upon the needle's point.

For a moment he feels dizzy, and he closes his eyes. When he reopens them, there, thank Heaven! yet floats his pretty ball, still gleaming in the sun, and he inwardly prays that the

people may not have noticed his attack of vertigo or that which caused it. Probably they did not, and so thinking, he puts on a brave front, but the iron has entered into his soul.

## XXVIII

## HOW TO ORIENT ONE'S SELF

THERE are many situations in which individuals are called upon to orient themselves where the conditions are not so simple as in that which at the moment I have in mind. For instance, when a man has been suddenly "knocked into the middle of next week," as the phrase is, an experience to which I imagine that most of us have unhappily been exposed at some time in the course of a checkered existence. The perplexity in such cases is great, for next week is an unknown quantity. Looking back over unnumbered years, it seems to me that I remember a quotation which ran something like this: "Mother, when will to-morrow come? Each morning, when I ope my eyes, I look for to-morrow, and behold! it is to-day." And I suppose that next week is quite as far off as to-morrow, and quite as uncertain in its whereabouts.

Even upon local option and sundry other questions social and political, it is not always easy to dream true, and I am told that on mat-

mean, or clock, time, and apparent, or solar, time, these appearing not to coincide excepting upon April 16, June 16, September 1, and December 25. Between these dates they wander around at their own sweet will, clock time being either fast or slow, as the case may be, and the difference in November being as great as sixteen minutes. To obtain my meridian from the sun, therefore, I must know that my watch is correct as to standard time, I must know my exact longitude, and I must know whether mean time is fast or slow, and how much. A slight error in either of the conditions would make a material difference in the result, and it is not easy for the ignoramus to make sure that he is right as to all.

There is one resource left—that is, to take an observation of Polaris, the north star. Why did I not think of this before? I did think of it before, and this is what came of it. Attaching a small stone to a piece of cord long enough to reach nearly to the floor, I made a rude plumbline, which I suspended from a bracket of the veranda. After long and watchful waiting I found a calm evening, or one so nearly calm that my pendulum was practically motionless; then, humbling myself, with my eye close to the floor, so that I could see Polaris, (for it is surprisingly exalted in this latitude), I took the range and made a record mark for which purpose I found that a

pair of etching needles which I planted in the floor of the veranda proved very serviceable. When the opportunity came for comparing the position thus found with my two hills, I discovered that it would not do at all; the axis was not in its proper groove, and the earth must of necessity move with a constant jar, not to speak of the displacement of the equinoxes.

And then it occurred to me that the North Star is not in the north, but revolves around the North Pole, (or appears to do so, because of the rotation of the earth), like all the other stars, and I began a new search of the encyclopædias, etc., for the facts. I was slow in discovering them, and the statements in regard to the facts did not always agree; but after a while I found that the North Pole itself is on a lark—that it is swinging around a circle upon a journey which will take about 26,000 years to complete. Happily, just now it is neighborly to Polaris, which revolves about it at a distance variously stated at from one degree and fifteen minutes to one degree and twenty-one minutes.

Now, this was making progress, but it was some time before I discovered upon which side of Polaris I should look for the pole. At length I learned that it was in a direction nearly opposite to the first star ( $\eta$ or Benetnasch) in the handle of the Dipper; but how

much space in the heavens—that is, how much space as compared with the apparent distances between the stars—a degree and a quarter would be I could only estimate.

I did estimate it, however, and my next observation was followed by a much more satisfactory result. And then I happened to turn in a direction in which I should have turned in the first instance had my foresight been as good as my hindsight, which I believe is rarely the case. On examining my planisphere with care, I found explicit directions for ascertaining the hour and minute when Polaris is on the meridian upon any day in the year. For the benefit of those who may come after me I will record here that this meridian passage occurs at about midnight (local time) on October 8, at eleven o'clock on October 23, ten o'clock on November 8, nine o'clock on November 23, eight o'clock on December 8, seven o'clock on December 24, and six o'clock on January 8. I mention these hours as the most convenient for observations.

It is true that in the use of this method, as well as in the observation of the sun, the difference between standard and local time must be taken into the account, but extreme accuracy is not so essential, for the rotation of Polaris is in so small a circle that an error of even several minutes in time is likely to cause less difference in the result than is

practically inevitable in drawing the line. And within the same limit of inaccuracy the matter of time may be left out of the account altogether at points farther north than this, when the atmosphere is very clear near the horizon. For when the plumbline crosses Polaris and Benetnasch both at the same time, the pole also is so nearly on the line as to give the meridian as accurately as it is likely ever to be obtained, except by an expert.

I could not allow my fresh information to become rusty. In the rural districts we keep early hours, and in the ordinary course of procedure I should have to wait for a month before finding an opportunity to use my newly acquired knowledge. However, the privilege having been afforded me of seeking after strange adventures in "The Wood Beyond the World," I managed to worry through until some time after midnight, when I could obtain a proper range. The air was not absolutely still, but was sufficiently so to enable me to prove my thesis and show to all succeeding ages where lies the pole, Peary, Jansen, Nordenskjold, or any or all others to the contrary notwithstanding.

Since these experiments were initiated and carried to an approximate conclusion, my appreciation of the work of the compilers of the

ninth edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica has been greatly enhanced by the discovery that they recommend the same method for ascertaining the meridian which I had adopted.

## XXIX

## A FAIR DAY

THE wise cannot be wise all the time, and this is a very large country over which to keep watch and ward. It is perhaps therefore not remarkable that on Friday evening the weather prophet issued this prediction as a forecast for Saturday:

"New England—The weather will continue fair, but with increasing cloudiness during the day; possibly local showers at night; southerly winds."

As a matter of fact, it began to rain at noon on Saturday, and for twenty-six hours, with two or three intermissions of a few minutes only, it has continued to rain, with a heavy wind—almost or quite a gale, blowing from the northeast. My great cistern is overflowing, and deep channels have been worn in the inclined driveway, to prevent the increase of which I have been pressed into service as a sapper and miner, to reopen lateral drains.

The rain is driven in gusts, sometimes nearly in horizontal lines, carrying with it such leaves as have been sufficiently loosened

from the branches to yield to its pressure, with which the fields are becoming thickly strewn, while many have been driven with such force against the house as to have firmly attached themselves to my eastern wall. Most of the time I seem to be in the midst of the clouds, very coarse wet clouds, indeed; and then the rain slackens, and I see denser clouds trailing their draggled skirts over the valley, or the hills beyond.

Though it is well toward mid-October the fields are very green, and the trees also for the most part, but with yellow and brown encroaching here and there, and now and then a brighter hue, especially in the lower portion of the valley where the swamp maples (were the sun to gleam upon them) would shine out resplendent in a burst of scarlet and crimson.

When for a moment this morning it seemed that the cloud canopy might break away, the nearer slopes of Talcott Mountain suddenly showed an effect emulating that of a gorgeous flower garden; the deep-toned evergreens overhanging the Pilgrim's Path serving as a foil for the profusion of color upon the deciduous trees.

Whereas the preceding south wind was icy cold, by a singular perverseness of nature this present blast from the north and east is mild and soft. Yesterday furnished a fair excuse for—nay, demanded as a necessity—that blaz-

ing hearth which is the very soul of home; but now, I am afraid that there is no such justification for the fire-worshiper, and the mildness of the temperature compels endurance of the dullness and dreariness of the scene.

The wind and the rain have brought the nuts rattling to the ground, and adventurous hunters have already laid in an ample store. This is not nutting as I remember it in the old boarding-school days, when everything was *couleur-de-rose!* I recall the autumn "nutting privileges" as the very center of the happy hours of youth.

We made our calculations long in advance, and surreptitiously obtained knowledge of the most promising localities. There were walnuts, and butternuts, and shellbarks, chestnuts and hazelnuts to be had, but I remember especially the occasions devoted to the shellbarks and the hazelnuts. The former grew in the woods, or along the creek in the valley; the latter upon special hillsides. Before the time likely to be selected (a holiday or half-holiday called a "privilege," granted for the purpose) we had formed partnerships, or divided into companies, each striving to corral at least one swift runner, and then when the signal was given, it was—ho, for the harvest field!

It was not so easy to appropriate a definite number of hazel bushes as to claim a definite

walnut tree or shellbark tree, but still something could be done in this, and the "hazel privilege" was the time of greatest enjoyment, at least for me. A bright clear day was always selected, and were it only the delight of tramping through the rustling leaves, where the hillside here and there opened over the valley, the sun gleaming through the thinning foliage and lying warm upon the fresh carpet, it were a delight and a joy forever.

Do boys find pleasure in such simple things in these modern days, I wonder? Perhaps I ought to be ashamed to confess to such low tastes, and it may not be an adequate extenuation that the royal year was culminating in a glory of color, marking in softening shades valley and hillside to the farthest reach of the eye; that the pure intoxicating air stirred the crisp leaves and those just fallen, among which we shuffled for the mere pleasure of their crackling response, and here and there a hare or a squirrel sprang, or a partridge whirred at our approach; while over all great argosies of cloud floated in a sea of sky so clear as to show in truth illimitable depths. Let it only be said deprecatingly that we were so young, so very young; so young indeed that the fairy finger of old Mother Nature, then laid upon our impressible spirits, left thereon an indelible sign and token that we belonged to her fellowship.

But let me look at the thermometer. It is only 66° in the study and it should be 68°; the deuce is between us. I am sure that I need a fire on the hearth, else dire calamities impend. Ah! that is something like! How the bits of pine flare and the larger wood crackles and sputters, startling poor Kittiwink, and almost frightening him out of his wits! The logs are still damp, for they have but recently been brought in from the shelter of the wood under the ledge, and have never basked freely in the broad sunlight. The tongues of flame diminish as the dry wood is consumed; there is a hissing sound as of escaping steam, and gray smoke drifts up the chimney and reappears outside the windows, falling to the ground, for the barometer is very low. Presently the wood will have dried out sufficiently to burn more freely. Meanwhile Kittiwink has subsided upon his accustomed cushion in the big armchair at the end of the mantelpiece, and with his nose buried between his forepaws and his forehead resting upon them, is sleeping the sleep of the just. I see that he is a diaphragm breather, as I am told that all babies are, however far they may be led astray afterward, and although his throat and chest appear motionless, his loins and abdomen have a strong and rhythmic rise and fall. Now he hears a door closing in another part of the cottage, rises into a sitting

posture without opening his eyes, stretches himself, and then again cuddles down to rest.

What a blessing it is that the fire does not continue to burn brightly and steadily! Think what a loss there would be, if we had no opportunity to stir it and poke it, pull this log forward, and push that one back, and generally indulge in all sorts of experiments. Every way makes our game, and the embers glow again, and the flame springs up, and like a living thing curls around the hissing fuel.

Is there any wonder that men should be fire-worshipers? I think the wonder is that they should not be so. One falls to musing as he sits in an easy-chair watching the flame, and thinking how, month by month, these many years cell has been added to cell and fiber to fiber; how the essence of the rock and the essence of the water and the essence of the air have collaborated in building up this harsh and rugged trunk, which now in as mysterious fashion unfolds itself and soars aloft, exhaling with light and heat into the infinite from whence it came.

I have been beguiling the stormy hours with "L'Homme qui Rit"—lazily, in the English, partly because I have it in the house only in that form; partly because, to tell the truth, the French of Victor Hugo is not so easy as some for a man whose French is only rough

and ready, and I am not in the humor for much work.

Victor Hugo is a poet rather than a novelist. His images pile up around him until he is submerged. As an artist it must be said that he "niggles." If I may for a moment compare great things with little, he is a poet in somewhat the same school as Walt Whitman. No! hardly that. Whitman—*pace*, all ye his admirers—*always* niggles. He is the poet of the index (considering the character of many of his poems, one might say, of the Index Expurgatorius), of the *catalogue raisonné*. Victor Hugo is much more than that, for he is a great writer—really great. He overloads his brush; he introduces disquisitions which are not pertinent; he winds and twists and travels all around Robin Hood's barn; he sometimes builds so many houses that it is impossible to see the town; but he has himself seen the town, and he knows what is in it, and in the houses as well, and manages to give you a very clear perception of it after all. There is little that he does not see, and in the immense profusion you are pretty sure to discover that which is your own, and find your characteristic note ringing out amid the hubbub.

But how he does load his canvas! He paints impasto, and uses the palette-knife. And it is in the modern fashion of laying on

raw color, and no half tints. He is just a little langweilig sometimes, perhaps,—you are fatigued, partly by his excess of color, partly by his discursiveness, but just when you are beginning to doze off, you wake up with a start, and find live creatures all about you.

Hour has passed after hour; the dark day has given way to dark night; the fire smolders on the hearth, but with bright coals glowing amid the ashes; and the heavy drops falling from the roof indicate that the "fair" weather still continues, with a good prospect of lasting into another day.

## XXX

# LAMB'S TALES

" Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep—
Where shall she go to find them?
Let them alone and they'll come home
With all their tails behind them."

MY friend Daphnis Patchouli, a late, very late, descendant of the well-remembered Tityrus T. of that name, to whom I have heretofore referred, has frequently expressed to me his surprise that the abandoned farms of which we hear so much, and other little-used territory in these New-England States, should not be employed in sheep husbandry. He points out to me numberless stony hillsides, partly covered with more or less worthless timber and partly lying open to the sun—in the latter case bearing a fair growth of what by courtesy may be called grasses,

" And visited all night by troops of stars
Or when they climb the sky or whenthey sink,"

and by little else. He also calls my attention to many hundred square miles of open country,

upon which well-meaning farmers are fighting a losing battle for the world's markets with those who are despoiling the Western prairies of the treasures of their rich soil, seconded in this commendable enterprise by the magnificent railway kings. And, becoming bolder, he casts an admiring glance over my green mountain meadow, and as my eye follows his he insinuatingly asks how many years it will be before I recover the cost of seeding it down to grass last season.

And when I reply deprecatingly that the market is said to be full of Western hay, and that the bicycles will not eat any, either of the domestic or of the imported article, and that I think that I shall get square upon the account of my plowing and harrowing and fertilizing and seeding in about six years, if I am very fortunate, he smiles a most peculiar and most exasperating smile.

And then he pictures these hills and fields studded over with flocks of browsing sheep, and asks me to

> "See the young lambs, how brisk and gay
> On the green grass they skip and play,"

and that sort of thing from the primer up. And waxing eloquent, as the vision fills the eyes of his spirit (that's right, isn't it?—or is the spirit a Polyphemus, with only one optic—"the spiritual eye"?) and he feels the

blood of his forefathers stirred within him to that degree of placidity which marked their race, he calls upon me to imagine myself with a well-formed crook by my side, reclining on the slumbering hillside, in busy idleness, contemplating the floating clouds above me or playing upon an oaten pipe

> "In notes, with many a winding bout,
> Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out."

to any or all of the Amaryllidaceæ.

And this touches me to the quick, for if there is any sentiment which appeals to the natural man within me, it is the sentiment of quiescence. Let the world wag!

Now, I don't think that Patchouli knows anything about the tariff on wool, whether it is on or whether it is off, and I am sure that he could not tell whether there is money in sheep or not, for he never analyzed them. He has confessed to me that he has a penchant for a very tender, juicy chop, provided he did not know the lamb from which it came, but this is about the limit as to ultimate purposes to which his knowledge extends.

He certainly showed a vein of the practical, so far as his lights went, in discussing the reason which has been alleged for the discontinuance of sheep-raising in this neighborhood; that the sheep were frequently worried

by dogs, and that sometimes a dog would kill twenty or more of them in a night. Said he:

"Is not the owner of the dog responsible for any sheep which he may kill?"

"Yes," was the reply, "but there are many dogs prowling around, the ownership of which is unknown or unacknowledged."

"Is there any difficulty in enforcing a requirement that the owner of a dog shall put upon him some unmistakable distinguishing mark?"

"None whatever."

"How long would it take your people, whose fondness for killing is so well known, to shoot every dog found without such a distinguishing mark?"

I was lying in wait for him, and here I had him at last.

"Aha! Mark how plain a tale shall put you down; that would be something useful; there would be no sport in that."

But, victorious as I was in this verbal contest, his frequent suggestions led me to thinking, and the more I thought the more I was tempted to try an experiment. But experiments are my *bête noire*. I am always trying experiments, and through them I have gained much experience, though little else. It would be in keeping with my text to say that I had gone out for wool and come home shorn. I have, however, learned to deliberate before

embarking on a new enterprise and to begin on a small scale. It must be confessed that this is not invariably a reliable method. You will remember the story of the Indian who, having heard much of the softness of a feather bed, took a feather and laid it upon a rock, and, after tossing upon it through the night, reported that if one feather was as hard as that, he did not want a whole bedticking full of them.

Being bent upon the experiment, but likewise having a frugal mind, I consulted my neighbors. Now I ought to say that I rarely have need to consult my neighbors about anything, being usually fully advised upon all points of interest before I have really become aware that I need assistance. That the advice received is not always homogeneous is true. I frequently need to remember the instruction given to a wayfarer regarding the road upon which he was traveling: "When you have gone so far you will find the road divide into two branches; don't take both of them."

Now, was it in this instance that my neighbors, with malicious intent, desired to take advantage of my urban ingenuousness, or was it that their minds were preoccupied with sympathy touching my ill-fated well and useless pump, that they advised me to begin cautiously and make my first experiment with a hydraulic ram? This species, said they, is hydropathic;

moreover, it is stationary and will not disturb your garden or other appurtenances. It is said that a wink is as good as a kick to a wise man, and, desiring to gain, if I might not yet aspire merely to retain, a reputation for wisdom, I was willing to give them the benefit of the doubt, and assume that we had been talking of the water supply all the time, and so I listened.

Do you know what a hydraulic ram is? A hydraulic ram is a mysterious creature which, being properly entreated and fed with a large amount of water, will complacently in return send a small amount of water to the point where you wish to use it. Now this description does not seem to define it as very different from certain other servants of man, but nevertheless it is quite different in operation. Suffice it to say that you set a big stream of water to running in such a way as to compress into a small chamber, the lungs of the creature, as it were, a body of air. The air is long-suffering, but at length rebels, and in its struggle to escape it sends a small stream of water climbing up hill. Its power of resistance being soon exhausted, it yields to renewed pressure until this pressure again becomes too great to be endured, and so on *ad infinitum* if nothing breaks and nothing wears out and the roots do not fill up your pipes.

This looked very nice, and I said: "Yes,

you may have your joke, and I will have my hydraulic ram, and I will lie on my back (if I can find a dry spot) and play upon my oaten pipe and watch my ram as it sputters and spouts, instead of going down into the cellar and pumping water up from the cistern, ha, ha!"

So much determined, I was reminded of Mrs. Glass's recipe, "First catch your hare." Where was my stream of water? Well, there are more ways than one of doing many things. Down in my old pasture, which is no longer used as a pasture, at the foot of a slope upon the lower portion of which are three or four shallow wells, in which certain of my neighbors are said to have a prescriptive right, is a marsh or swamp sixty or eighty feet lower than the cottage. A marsh is always an interesting place, especially to an artist, and also to one who is fond of wild flowers, for here he will find them in the greatest profusion and variety. And then what possibilities of snakes are here, not to speak of muskrats and other wild fowl!

My marsh was always full of standing water, even in the driest season, and during and after heavy rains it shed a torrent, but there was no constant brook perceptible. At first I made modest demands upon it. I had two or three shallow pools dug at slightly different levels, that nature might be refreshed

by looking upon the reflection of herself as in a glass, with open cuts running from the upper to the lower. In doing this I discovered that instead of a deep deposit of loam there was merely a thin coating of black earth over a bed of blue clay, and through my little conduits ran a small stream of water, even during the September drought.

At the end of the season I was encouraged by this fact to make a bolder demand, and I said to myself that if I should run a drain eighteen inches deep for one hundred feet or so along the foot of the slope I should intercept all the water which was hastening or lazily loitering, as the case might be, down from the high land into the marsh; that the various contributions, gathered into a sufficient stream, could be conducted by covered tiles into a tank, and from this tank a drive pipe could be led into a pit, to the ram, from which pit, by other buried tiles, the waste water could be generously deposited in the middle of my neighbor's lot.

And so it was ordered. And soon a goodly stream (on a small scale) was running through my upper drain, and off, by a temporary outlet, into the lower pools.

But I have a very good friend who is a street sweeper in New-York, the boss of the gang (baas, as the Dutch had it), [alas! poor Waring!] who knows more about draining

than anybody else, and he writes me that my drains should go eighteen inches deeper, and the tank and pit accordin'.

And that is the reason why, encased in big rubber boots, I have been engaged in the rain this morning in fixing grades and running lines. The laborers were frightened away by the storm, which, it is fair to say, was then heavier than during the period in which I was out in it. But I find that day laborers not infrequently become discouraged early.

Sooth to say, the digging in which they are engaged is not an agreeable occupation. The earth—in part a stiff clay—has been completely saturated with water, and the numerous stones, large and small, which are imbedded in it are held as a stone is held by the wet leather of a boy's "sucker," and yield to solicitation at last, if they do yield, with a weary sigh. But for the most part, the earth is a close, coarse gravel, which has not been rolled sufficiently to become rounded, in which the blows of the pick-ax make a weak impression, while the men stand in running water of anything but a comfortable temperature.

The long and sometimes heavy rain has turned my tiny stream into a brawling brook, a small percentage only of which would supply my modest demands. And I am sanguine that

this percentage will be mine, under all but the most trying conditions of our particularly trying climate. And should I be successful in this case, what may I not be encouraged to attempt? Then, *revenons à nos moutons.*

## XXXI

## THE WASPS

I HAVE written of my experiences with the wasps in the early autumn. As the season grew colder, because of my vigorous hunting, and, as I now suppose, for other reasons, they gradually disappeared, and for some time none were visible. Then came certain warm days when, upon going again to the loft, I found them literally swarming. For a while I tried my old methods, but in vain. It was like Mrs. Partington's effort to sweep back the ocean with a broom, and I was shortly driven from the field.

For some days I did not venture into the loft, and I began to wonder whether I might not finally be wholly driven from the premises by the increasing hosts. I had never heard of any such event happening, but neither had I ever heard of such an onslaught as I had already experienced. Stepping upon the ladder in the morning, I would slightly raise the scuttle and peep through, but as quickly close it again lest the enemy should take to the offensive.

I discovered, however, that when night fell,

and especially when the temperature became somewhat lower, they would cease flying, and congregate in clusters upon the glass or upon the under side of the roof. This gave me some courage. And then one happy day a neighbor suggested to me to try upon them a certain insect powder. I shall not advertise its name here, but if anyone desires information concerning it, I shall be most happy to respond. Suffice it that I procured some of the powder, and taking advantage of a period when my opponents were sluggishly reposing, administered the dose. The effect was magical. It did not kill them instantly, but their doom was sealed. Dismay entered their ranks, and their only effort was to flee, but no escape was possible after the deadly powder had been inhaled. Day after day I followed up the attack, and morning after morning I swept up the victims by the hundreds.

After a number of days the re-enforcements seemed to fail, and then, the weather growing colder, the supply wholly ceased. With the advancing spring I shall expect new tribes from their hiding places, but I fear them not. With my powder and my rubber bellows I am master of the situation, and it is not the *Polistes rubiginosus* which will drive me from Underledge.

## XXXII

## WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE

HEAVEN is occasionally lavish of its bounties when we least need them, and sparing, not to say niggardly, when they would be most acceptable. I have even heard wonder expressed that the sun should shine in the day, when it is so light, and not at night, when we are so greatly in want of it. I felt this quite poignantly this evening, as I crossed the mountain meadow. When I reached the entrance from the highway, I could discern some objects faintly outlined against the sky which I knew must be the posts on either side, and away ahead, a dim light, not the usual bright ray, told me the direction of the cottage. Some distance to the right, a denser blackness indicated the general position of the ledge. Somewhere above I imagined the sky to be, and somewhere beneath I supposed was the earth, for I stood upon something, but I could distinguish nothing by sight, and was compelled to feel my way with my feet over the soggy turf.

In the direction of the valley I saw lights of varying degrees of brightness glimmering through the fog. This did not appear to be so dense as it had been during the day, but was simply an all-pervading blackness.

It was yesterday that it rained—and how it did rain! From long before daylight (and the daylight did not amount to much) until far into the night, it beat upon the earth and upon the remaining snow, and it poured over the cliffs and over the frozen but thawing slopes, gaining volume as it concentrated in the hollows and plunged toward the valley. I shall say nothing about the cellar, or how, the carefully arranged ditches and drains having comfortably frozen up, the streams combined to pour down through the cellar bulkhead, the door of which would not close tight because of much swelling,—fortunately to be immediately carried off at the opposite corner. It was a happy accident that the builder had been brought up in the school of that modern Greek who, what time there happened an unfortunate giving way in the bow of his boot, wisely made an equivalent aperture through the stern, so that the water which " ran in at the toe ran immejetly out at the heel." Incidents of this character are of the nature of those accidents which will happen in the best regulated families, and should only be mentioned in the strictest confidence.

Near Sunset Rock, a miniature cataract, like that upon a mountain stream, fell over the ledge into the ice-covered road, upon which I staggered and slipped at the imminent risk of my old bones in trying to ascertain the source of the torrent.

And then the river went out over the lowlands. Already yesterday afternoon we had heard that trouble had occurred along the Pequabuck, and that one of our neighbors had found the bridge gone, and had been compelled to cut his horse loose, as he crossed at "Eight Acre." But the water of the Tunxis had only begun to rise, and we could not expect that it would reach its full height before this morning. And the morning broke, or perhaps I ought to say, bent, and the atmosphere was so constructed that it might have been cut into comfortable slices, and my neighbor's old apple trees only indicated their position by an almost imaginary tone in the grayness which enveloped us. And there was no valley, but only a vast sea of colorless cloud, in which we were quietly floating.

I hoped to look out during the day upon the great lake, which is one of our luxuries reserved for special occasions, but, though the presumptive line between the visible and the invisible varied a little from hour to hour, it never traveled further than about two hundred yards away. And so, as the mountain

prove harmful under these circumstances than under others which might be imagined.

Now and then a canoe or a rowboat would slowly take form and emerge from nowhere in particular, generally filled with frolicking lads; and once a round dark object on the surface of the water gradually revealed itself as the head of a dog, which was paddling for the shore, but looked as if the water were his natural element.

But the great and indescribable beauty of the picture was in the trees, which loomed through the fog in every degree of softness of outline, until in the distance they became an evanescent blur. Excepting where the current rippled against the iron rails of the trolley road, as they lost themselves in the tide, the surface was as smooth as a mirror, and in this every detail of near or distant tree was reflected with absolute fidelity, and, since the gray of the water faded into the gray of the fog without any line of demarcation, the firmament under the waters could only be distinguished from the firmament above the waters by the angle of reflection.

And all this water we are going to waste by sending it down into the Quonehtacut, and so into the Sound, where it will lose itself in the briny deep, which is full enough already.

## XXXIII

## ONLY THE STARS

FROM my watch tower on the hill I see so much sky that to behold it would, I am sure, make the child of a city court open wide its eyes with wonder. It is real sky, too, with a real sun in it sometimes, and clouds that float grandly across its vault; now great snowballs and now mountains of cloud, Ossa piled upon Pelion; and then long lines stretching from verge to verge, or flocks of sheep, or great flights of birds, or thin wisps and curls of silken fiber. And at night there are stars in it, such hosts of stars, glittering and twinkling in the vast firmament. And I try to picture the light of these stars as it speeds on its wonderful journey through space—light which left its home in other years and has been ever since flying onward toward me at the rate of nearly two hundred thousand miles a second. Endeavor to realize it—yet I am sure that the endeavor will be vain!

Perhaps the star which was the source of this light became darkened long ago; yet still plunging forward through vacancy, or that which we esteem such, at a speed which we

can name in figures, but which we cannot in the least appreciate, a speed ten million times as great as that of the fastest railroad train, the shell of light of the vanished orb, surrounding it upon every side as a perfect sphere, expands, to break at length upon our earth or upon whatsoever other infinitesimal particle of the sublime universe it may happen upon in its course. Like a soap bubble, but instead of bursting it continues to enlarge, and to enlarge as though distended by an explosion of giant power whose force is unceasing, and to advance at a rate compared with which that caused by an explosion would be the merest child's play. For the light spreads fifty thousand times as fast as the impulse produced by the ignition of gun cotton.

But how can we picture these things so as to bring any definite vision before our minds? We look out upon the "quiet stars" which are having their own fling through space at a rate probably of many thousand miles per minute, but at a distance from us which is so great that any motion whatever is only perceptible after the lapse of very many years. We do not see them as they are, but as they were long, long ago. This much, at least, we know: it is not the stars as they are at present that we see, but the stars of the past. The same stars may be there now, but only long years hence we, or those who come after

us, will see them as they now are. We are reading the history of the past, the history of the universe, day by day, in order as it was written, but it is ancient history.

On more than one occasion the men that scan the heavens have seen a star appear, or rapidly increase to enormous brightness, and then fade into insignificance. This, too, was a story of the past. They read the tale in the message brought by the light as they might have read it in a newspaper of years gone by. The calamity, whatever it may have been, was not of to-day. Do not try to dodge the lightning when you hear the thunder. It had run its course and performed its work before the first muttering of the message throbbed upon your ear. But sound is very slow; it takes nearly five seconds to travel a mile. Yet, when I hear an express locomotive rumbling over yonder bridge and raise my eyes, it has already safely crossed the river and proceeded upon its way.

A prejudice is frequently expressed by scientic men, or perhaps I should rather say by pseudo-scientific men, against "popular science," by which I understand to be meant information upon various themes which is cast in a form intended to interest the general public, and not stated in the strictest scientific manner, with courses and distances. I can never resist an opportunity to express the

strongest possible dissent from this attitude. Immutable as is the field of that which probably must remain unknown, and almost boundless as is the field of that which might be known, of recorded knowledge the extent is so vast that the scraps and fragments can ever come within the ken of any one individual, even though he have a capacity like that of Herbert Spencer. And for the ordinary man or woman of the world (and a true man or woman of the world is, I imagine, what most of us are ambitious to be), it is wholly impossible to be fully instructed in even one of the sciences which together form the sum of human knowledge.

We have our own work to do, our own part to play. Excepting for the specialist, it is not important, however interesting, yes, fascinating, it might be, that all that is knowable upon any subject should be learned and assimilated. But it is of the utmost importance that not merely the casual individual, but everyone of sufficient intellectual capacity to catch a glimmering idea of anything beyond the bare bones of existence, should gain some conception of the awe-full universe that he lives in, and alike of the paradox of his dignity as a man and his utter insignificance. "I am a Roman citizen!" was once a proud cry; "I am a citizen of the world!" should be a prouder cry, but worthless to him who has nothing to show

pertaining to his citizenship, either of knowing, of being, or of doing; or of all three of these, which comprise the whole duty of man.

For anything beyond the mere rags and tatters of life, the awakening and the education of the imagination are essential. Ah! let me once more draw my bow across this string; like the G string of Paganini's violin, it is tuned to respond to all the music of the spheres. Not until the beauty of the world and the wonder of life impress the soul with their immeasurable vastness, and not until these suggest in turn a wonder and a beauty compared with which they are but as the alphabet, has life really more than spent its childhood. Man does not live by bread alone; if he did, the shorter his life, the better would it be for all hands. To be a man, he must live in the spirit as well as in the flesh.

But to do this it is not necessary that he should pack his memory with complete schemes of genera and species, or with tables of logarithms or co-efficients. He need not know all the data in relation to the precession of the equinoxes, or every possible speculation regarding the fourth dimension of space. If his life's work is not that of a classifier, or an astronomer, or a mathematician, it is not necessary for him to know these. But if he be a man of the world, to take what may be accounted an extreme example, it will not by

any means be valueless to him to know what is meant by the fourth dimension of space, and to learn that, whereas we have been accustomed to reckon that we have compassed all of form by taking account of length, breadth, and thickness, some of the most acute reasoners of the age have thought it not unprofitable to speculate upon the possibility of another, an unknown, dimension, and to carry far the calculations which embody such an hypothesis.

> "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

How it is possible for the man whose vision extends only to the things and the relations which immediately surround him to have any broad or just views of sociology, of politics, of religion, of anything? One may, indeed, have wide knowledge, and his views may yet be worthless, but at least this may be said truly: that unless one can gain a point of vantage where he may rid himself of forced and false perspective, his views are liable to be as distorted and misleading as those sometimes appear to be which were taken in a camera with a wide-angled lens.

Which reminds me that I was looking out from my veranda upon "the cold light of stars," and intended, in a moment, to write of quite a different matter. But that must now pass over unto a more convenient season.

"The stars, in their courses, fought against Sisera," and they have fought against me, and compelled me, as the angel that met Jacob in the way, to wrestle with them. But again the story of Antæus comes to mind; while the struggle continued, each time that he was thrown to the ground he arose with renewed strength. Perhaps, occasionally, our brains whirl a little, and we are inclined to say: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it." If it come but to a humble thought such as this, it is an awakening and a chastening which may be salutary. But the truer discipleship is to think the creative thoughts over again.

Remember, however, that knowledge in itself is nothing worth; it is the spirit that quickeneth. Beware of cherishing mere lifeless bones and toneless catalogues.

> "These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights
> That give a name to every fixèd star
> Have no more profit of their shining nights
> Than those that walk and wot not what they are."

Or they may not have. It is the "stream of tendency" that gives life to the dry bones and voice to the dumb catalogues, and it is the vitalizing dip into the refreshing tide of that stream which one must feel.

And so, good-night!

> "To all, to each, a fair good-night,
> And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light."

## XXXIV

## THE LIGHTS IN THE VALLEY

I SUPPOSE that one might be well content, especially if he be a denizen of the city, with a chance opportunity to trace the glittering light of stars from the zenith to the horizon. But at Underledge we follow it still farther downward into the underworld, and on a moonless night it is sometimes difficult to perceive where the heavenly lights end and the earthly ones begin. Most of these lower ones are fixed stars, yet indicate orbs which I assume are inhabited, whatever may be the case with the other fixed stars and the planets. Occasionally a meteor passes slowly across in front of me, and at length disappears. Perhaps someone might call it the headlight of a trolley car, but what know I? I am told that I cannot know anything save through my physical senses, and what have my physical senses to do with anything far away out there in space? Is it not in fact within me, the thing which I see?

I have recently written about waves, of

which I know nothing, in a medium called ether, of the existence of which I have no proof. I wrote as if there were but a single series of these waves, and it seemed very simple, if wholly beyond actual comprehension. But suppose instead of one series of light waves, we try to comprehend an infinite number of series, simultaneous, meeting and crossing each other in every conceivable direction from every existent particle emitting or reflecting light? This may contribute to the luminosity in fact, but it does not contribute to the luminosity in thought. And suppose we add to these the electric or magnetic waves, and the waves of radiant heat, and the X-rays of Roentgen, and those that follow, all these in like manner acting at cross purposes in the mysterious ether? Have we not by this time built up a tolerably composite problem with which to deal?

I do not suggest this because I wish to compete with the Rev. Jasper in denying a generally accepted scientific hypothesis in favor of one that has been exploded, or of one newly manufactured by myself. I simply wish to call attention to the ease with which we are apt to rest satisfied with names—with expressions—with theories, and feel that we are very wise. "That man? Oh, that is John Smith." "Why do the orbs remain poised in space, revolving around their axes

and around each other? They are held there by the attraction of gravitation: haven't you learned that yet?" "What causes our perception of light? Waves of a certain amplitude and rapidity, which, passing through the imponderable ether, impinge upon the nerve of sight." Excellent and admirable, and doubtless true in a sense, but what then?

Are we any nearer the heart of things when we have asked the questions and have received these answers? Perhaps: I would fain believe that we are, but if it be so it can only be because our minds are thereby stimulated to recognize interactions of force and life which are utterly beyond our comprehension, and not because we know any better who John Smith is in consequence of knowing his name, or understand what causes the attraction of gravitation, or can figure to ourselves these numberless conflicting waves which do not conflict, or perceive why they should cause vision or produce the other marvelous effects of which we are aware.

The man who can be led to a crass materialism by such considerations as these must be weak indeed, and, on the other hand, the man who is confirmed in his belief that science is of no account, but that all the riches of omniscience and infinity are comprised within the limits of his twopenny-halfpenny, six-by-nine

traditional creed, is worse than an infidel and much more hopeless.

When we come to base all our important hypotheses upon the universal diffusion of an imponderable ether, have we not come dangerously near the dividing line between the conceptions of matter and of spirit? If the ether is imponderable and universally diffused, the source or medium of all force,—since it is not subject to the law of gravitation, it is certainly not matter in any ordinary acceptation of that term. It if is not matter, is it then spirit? Or is there a third department, neither matter nor spirit, as Purgatory is claimed to be neither Heaven nor Hell?

There I go again, and simply because a trolley car passed across the valley, its great monocle staring in front, and blue flashes sparkling from time to time on the wire. But it is not to be wondered at, for when you have harnessed the lightning it seems an exceptionally spectacular performance, though, in the last analysis, any one thing is not more strange than any other thing excepting in the sense that it is less familiar.

But to come down to plain everyday things, hills and valleys, and woods and fields, houses and people, love and hate, life and death, things that we are quite familiar with and thoroughly understand, you know! Here I sit in my lonely watch tower, and see one by

one the lights appear that mark the household gatherings, and I sometimes wonder how much real life there is beneath the show of life there manifested. I know a little, a very little about some of these circles, and what I know leads me sometimes to hope that there are deeps which I have not fathomed. Some of the houses from which these lights gleam, have sheltered many generations, and looking back over the past, it is difficult to avoid imagining that there must still be more life in some of those occupants who disappeared long, long ago, than now animates those who supply their places.

Yonder, for instance—do you see that light gleaming beyond the pasture, and a stone's throw down the farther slope? That should be the light of the candle upon the study table of Dr. Todd, the beloved physician, but alas! his familiar form has been under the daisies for more than sixty years. Was that the end of all? I do not know. But I do know that, lacking the ability to accept the dominant faith then strenuously held and strongly urged by most as of supreme importance, he was yet able to win the hearts of all; to be not merely the caretaker of their bodies, but to be brightness to those who were in gloom, peace to those who were perturbed in spirit, rest for the weary, sympathy for the sorrowing, a companion and a friend for those whom loneliness

overcame, a helpful confidant for such as needed a listening ear. His violin was his own chief solace, and he was so full of music that he exhaled an atmosphere of harmony wherever he appeared. Even one of whom it might truly be said

> "Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
> Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,"

felt irresistibly the soothing of his presence. Where now is that spirit which then was so rich, so full, and so helpful? Has it been wasted?

sweet spirit of the past in the soul, and with the awful and majestic infinities over one, the dream of a greater glory and a greater peace might come to enwrap the spirit long buffeted, and overworn.

## XXXVI

## THE SENSE (OR THE NONSENSE?) OF COLOR

FANDY Sækel has been painting the valley from my slope. Strictly speaking, he has not been painting it red, but rather purple. One of his studies was begun in front of the fringe of wood which in summer masks the ledge, but at this season reveals the dry bones of the earth protruding at the summit; upon a subsequent day, the weather not being wholly accommodating, he started another in my neighbor's field just over the line below my pasture, and upon this he has worked assiduously during several mornings. The choice of a point of view was felicitous. Directly in front falls a swale with gently sloping sides upon which stand ragged old apple trees: upon a swampy bit of bottom land are tall brown weeds and coarse marsh grass, with two or three picturesque elms, fed by the copious moisture: between the branches appear ancient roofs and chimneys scattered irregularly; while over the tops, parts of the intervale show here and there, with the ranges of hills off upon the

horizon, and a suggestion of the gap through which the Tunxis makes its way from the mountains. It is a scene of ideal as well as real beauty, and to me, though under most lights full of color, the color is ethereal: now, in the morning, soft salmon pink upon the lower sky, fading into gray-blue above, and contrasting gently with blues upon the distant mountains, and occasional hints of purple; tawny browns and yellows upon the fields and slopes, the color of the lion's hide, as my friend the good physician says,—blending softly into the neutral green of the distant pines; pearly blues and grays and soft maroons upon the nearer trunks and scattered rocks in the sunlight, by which they are projected clearly against the golden and yellow browns of the grass and weeds. The whole is a symphony (that, I believe, is the accepted term, and nowhere in color more appropriately placed than here) of agreeable discords, and quiet harmonies, and restful unisons, such as appeal most sympathetically to the craving for pleasurable repose, and inactive but most real Zufriedenheit. One is compelled to use strong names to indicate the hues which are suggested to the mind, but the names are sharp and hard and crude, and for the most part no more describe the softly flowing tints than word pictures can suggest that mysterious bias of the inner man, of which Coleridge sings:

" All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame."

Fandy has a nice and assured touch, and a good sense of composition and perspective. When I stood beside him as he approached the termination of his task, he asked me how I liked his picture. In a sort of way I expressed my satisfaction with the features of which I have just spoken, but added, " I cannot see the colors as you have them,—of such intensity and showing such strong contrasts." He might have replied like Turner—" Don't you wish you could? " but more courteously said that if I should see the picture in the house, I would not think the colors too bright. To this I responded, " Perhaps so," but in truth I did not think it. I had seen this kind of thing before, many, many times before. I am sure that in numerous cases, as in this, it is an honest effort after truth in effect: I am equally sure that in a vastly greater number of cases it is either reckless dissipation in color, or merely the utilization for pecuniary reward of the " fad " of the period. At its best it is a conscientious struggle after the effect *en plein air,* an admirable effort. But the actual results are sometimes adapted to make one's brain whirl.

(Indeed, if I may be so indiscreet, I may

reveal the fact that a horse driven by David Mapelson positively refused to pass one of Fandy's sketches the other day.)

If Mr. Sækel had replied to me in Turner's words, "Don't you wish you could?" I should have been compelled to answer, "No, I do not. I was brought up and have been nurtured on the sunset and the rainbow; I have become attached to these spectacles, and have grown old and gray under them, and am not strong enough to surrender them now. Your palette is almost spent; what have you left with which to paint me these?" To which I am fain to believe that he would have been at a loss what to reply.

And yet a certain horror of apprehension seizes me. What if I am afflicted with a curious sort of color-blindness: an affection which permits me to see the relation of tints under one set of conditions, and draws a veil over my eyes or produces an effect of spherical or chromatic aberration in another? Perhaps there are no such colors in the sunset and in the rainbow as I imagine that I see in them, but, on the contrary, these show only neutral tints with which the palette is competent to deal with ease. Or perhaps it may be another sort of deficiency: I remember that when that brilliant scientific lecturer, Professor Tyndall, appeared before us at the Brooklyn Academy and showed the wonders of the spectrum, by

interposing certain prepared sheets he extended the same far into the nether darkness, and revealed a glow of light in spaces to the appearance of light in which our imperfect eyes were not wonted. Is it that in the evolution of the race, the barrier of grossness and dullness of sense has at length been broken down, and that which was and is, to us who are passing, but as a sealed book, has become to the newer generation an open vision?

Mayhap this is the secret, and if it be so, we can but as faithful stoic-epicureans be thankful for the pleasures which we have enjoyed, and hail with equanimity and a sympathetic thrill the greater glories which have dawned upon the eyes of our successors. May they live to drink in as much rapture of delight in their ever scintillating prismatic world as we have found in the calmer and quieter world which we have been content to call our home.

But still another idea arises. Perhaps I have been but dreaming all these years, and I am now just feeling the restlessness of approaching consciousness. "I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was; man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream," as Bottom says.

"Where is it now, the glory and the dream?" Where is it now? In the very pith and marrow of the bones of those of us

who have come under the glamour of her before whose light even painters must bow the knee.

> " . . . We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on."

Come then, let me dream again, nor wake me from my vision of the heavenly beatitudes of this earthly world, until with a reverent hand you take the brush—not to improve upon nature—that you cannot do,—not to imitate nature,—for this also you cannot do, but to spell out in color and form the song which nature has written with a pencil of light, as it thrills along nerves tuned to her key, but still human nerves with their human and personal ingredient to contribute to the harmony.

## XXXVII

## THE LATE JACK FROST

NOT that Jack is dead—far from it. Indeed, to-day he appears very much alive. At noon on Monday the thermometer registered 55°, and it rained, and it rained; it was a summer downpour. Forty hours later it registered 15°, the air was as clear as a bell, and the ground seemed like flint. The late Frost made his appearance on this occasion, and his antics were, like the heathen Chinee, peculiar.

I have had occasion to lay a walk about two hundred yards long from the cottage to the highway, and I have learned a thing or two. Like that of Fernandiwud, in the "New Gospel of Peace," this walk is slantindicular, and it is slightly, though not greatly, circumambient. A part of the ground being at times, and especially in the Spring, inclined to be moist, not to say wet, with the water descending from the ledge, instead of depressing the path, as is often done, I have elevated it several inches, using as material a more or less completely disintegrated rock, underlaid (for a portion of the distance only) with small stones.

I argued that by this means I should induce the water to run off, and so leave me, under ordinary circumstances, a dry path. Such, indeed, was the result, and so far, well. But

"The best laid plans o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley."

In dry weather, hot or cold, or temperate, my path serves me excellently. In merely rainy weather it does as well as I have any right to ask, and better than some of the village sidewalks. But again,

"They reckon ill who leave me out,"

and in this case the "me" is, as I suppose, capillary attraction. I didn't know much about capillary attraction—who does? I have discovered to my discomfort, (occasional only, I hope, not frequent), that, while the waters from above are not much of a nuisance, the waters from beneath—the waters under the earth—are very much so.

I remember that they used to say that water seeks its own level; it appears that it also seeks the level of somebody else. Who but a wise man—and I am sorry to say that most of us dare not aspire to be included in that category—who but a wise man would have anticipated that when the ground beneath became soaked, instead of the water from the path descending

to mingle its tide with the main body, the waters from below would bob up serenely through each several pore and produce upon the surface a beautiful brown substance of exactly the proper consistence for the making of a mud pudding, or to relieve you of your loose overshoes? Especially when the aforesaid John has been around during the night playing his pranks and is followed curiously by the sun spying out all his devices. Then until the scamp has been completely driven off the field, your best course will be—I am sorry to say it, for it seems inhospitable—to step off upon the grass on one side, and treat the path as some drawing-room chairs seem to be constructed to be treated, or as the backwoodsman endeavored to treat the cuspidor—"avoid it altogether." I fear that this famous path will not be satisfactory at all times until I provide a different surface.

But this morning the condition above described did not exist; and just for the reason that the late John had put in his fine work with such skill, and held to it so tenaciously, that even the all-conquering sun was compelled to make a pause. And his work was done in a way that greatly interested me.

Upon the loose sloping sides, and also upon the upper portion of the path, excepting upon the middle, which has been made rather firm by many footfalls, are ranked pillars of ice, in

most cases standing quite close together and being two or three inches in height and from an eighth to a quarter or a third of an inch in thickness. but made up of threadlike crystals. Often quite straight and parallel, like basaltic columns, they are perhaps as frequently somewhat curved, and occasionally they are quite bent over and wound into volutes or spirals. Many of them are grimy with sand and earth; others carry only a cap of earth upon their heads, while most seem clear and crystalline. Lying sometimes across the tops of several of these are small plants of buttercup or sorrel or tufts of grass, which have been ejected root and branch and cast upon the cold charity of a most uncompromising world. This is one of the forms of suffering which bear most hard upon vegetation during a snowless season. Last year our hillsides were not free from snow after the fifth of November, this year the snow came a month later, and, although it persists, it does so apologetically, and conceals itself in hollows and shady places as much as it may.

Falling back upon that mysterious power or effect which is called capillary attraction, on account of which liquids are given to ascending skyward in slender tubes, I suppose that the water in the earth mounts steadily in the same direction through the fine pores in the material; that in warm or moderate, dry

or windy weather it is immediately evaporated and borne away, but in cold weather it is frozen on reaching the surface, and so remains to be lifted into the air and held in support by the rising tide. This may be quite unscientific, but "that's the way it looks." I noticed the same condition upon the sides of my trenches wherever the ground was wet, the whole being covered with serried files of icy guardians.

In a small open ditch upon the lowland another curious effect struck me, due to the frost, but merely an accidental incident. There is considerable fall in the ditch, and the bottom is slightly irregular and uneven. A roof of ice has formed over it just above the present surface of the running water, but so close that the water from time to time reaches this roof. Where the air is interposed, the tone is of the usual white or gray resulting from this fact, but where the water touches the ice the gray effect disappears, giving place to the familiar leaden tone of clear ice resting upon water. In consequence we have creeping and writhing down the ditch a succession of constantly changing forms like pollywogs, or the formless Proteus, *Amoeba diffluens*. The effect is extremely odd. We think of the passage as a great throat, and remember Thackeray—was it?—in his first experience with an American oyster, when he felt as if

he had swallowed a baby, or the man who was so delighted with his tipple that he wished his œsophagus were a mile long.

The windows have only begun to show those forests of arctic vegetation which follow in form—away off, and, as it were, in the cerements of the grave—the luxuriant growths of the torrid zone. Is it not singular, this imitation in colorless crystal of the forms of tropic vegetation, which in their own home suggest all that is of heat and passion—ravenous beasts and venomous serpents full of malignancy; and heavy, hot, malarious vapors, and leaden-eyed repose! Here, every vestige of their fire gone, they yet sparkle and glitter on our window panes, the pure abstraction of that which was so full of life and glow, and all about them are the counterfeit presentments of the stars themselves, in like ethereal character and alike ephemeral. For let but a ray of the sun touch them—at the mere suggestion of the warmth which is the life of their prototypes, they fly away into the unfathomable abyss that engulfs the things that were.

One perfect loveliness of the valley rarely comes to me upon the hill. The fog does not often rise to the cottage, and the vapors which float from the steaming river upon the coming of sudden cold never reach me. Consequently it is the rare exception when the weeds and shrubs and trees upon the hillside

adorn themselves with that transcendent jewelry with which they are frequently clothed in the valley. I must get down among the folk who inhabit the lowlands, and past them to the bank of the river itself, to see this display at its best. But one to whom the spectacle is familiar knows full well that the walk, a delight in itself, is a small price to pay for so wonderful a show, and those who have never seen it might put a girdle round the earth and embrace nothing more beautiful of its kind.

As the currents of vapor-laden air strike the blades of grass, the graceful brown or gray spikes of the goldenrod or of the aster or wild carrot, the wires of the fence, the tufts of hanging horsehair, the twigs and branches of the shrubs and trees, from every point spring fairy fernlike forms, the veriest thistledown in crystal; and when the morning breaks the world is sheathed in silver plumes, the like of which no mortal hand could fashion. A breath of wind, a touch upon the tree trunk, and all the air is filled with flashing gems. And this is Jack Frost's jewelry for festal days.

## XXXVIII

## UN MAUVAIS QUART D'HEURE

MY muscles are quite unused to such continued violent exercise, but if I find them steady enough I must record my very latest exciting experience while it is still fresh. But first let me take another observation and assure myself that all is as it should be. Yes, the field is secure, and now to my story.

Since the coming of the Autumn I have been much annoyed by the seed-vessels of the *Bidens,* Sticktight or Beggar ticks or Bur Marigold, which has effected a lodgment, and a very secure one, in the swamp, and especially upon the northwest margin of the lower pool and between that and the fence. During the summer, being busy with other matters, I paid no attention to it, merely noticing a bright yellow glow along the margin, and not taking account of its cause. But since age has dimmed and quenched the color, and brought ripeness to the plants, I have had frequent occasion to pass that way, and each time have been the victim of a most exasperating felonious attack.

The little triangles of the Desmodium are bad enough, but when the Sticktight or the Spanish needle takes hold of you, you are lost. You step incautiously into a group of the innocent-looking dry plants and out again, and upon your trousers and your coat, and whatsoever other woolen garments it has been your evil fortune to wear upon your exterior on that auspicious occasion appear in serried ranks the preposterous seed-vessels, vowing that you shall do their behest, and spread them abroad that they may find " fresh woods and pastures new." And then, when you have sought a place of safety, and patiently (of course) and with as little use of " language " as comports with the occasion, picked off each individual little wretch, and thrown it upon the ground to germinate next season, in all probability, upon making your next motion you again put your foot into it.

Such has been my fate many times during the installation of the water works, and at length I vowed that I would be saved by fire if in no other way. But, try as I might, the — things (with an adjective) would not burn. Over and over again I started the fire among the dead leaves and the grass stems and blades, and after a little deceptive burst, and a little flickering, it would ignominiously expire.

To-day, hoping that a short dry spell had made the material more combustible, I deter-

mined to try it again. The wind was rather fresh, and to avoid risk I started my blaze upon the leeward side of the group of worst offenders, next the small sheet of ice. Again and again—I suppose nearly a dozen times—I set a burning match to the material. Once the fire spread over a space of eight or ten feet and then expired; in other cases the area burned over was very trifling.

Annoyed by my ill success, I crossed over toward the fence, and again touched a match to a dry clump, hoping that the draft would carry the flame into the mass, and create such a body of heat as would bear it across to the border of the pool. Still another failure.

I tried it once more in the same quarter: it was once too often. It will not do to torment the djinn overmuch. In a moment I had a nice blaze. A moment after I had a fine blaze. And I had hardly realized this fact when I comprehended that I had an ardent blaze, that it was not traveling just in the direction which I desired, and that the wind was high.

On the north side of the pool there was a narrow brake of wild roses, with a margin of grass and weeds between it and the water, or rather ice, and on the other side of it a fringe of the same kind between it and a small plot covered with dry corn stalks. It was toward this brake that the flame sprang, and upon it

that it divided, going past the pool, upon the north side. The flame was flung into the air, hot and high. I was startled, and sprang for a stick with which I had intended to direct it, and by beating tried to stay it upon the side next the corn, but in vain; the flame jumped past me, a yard at a time. Fortunately the dry corn did not come close to the edge of the swamp; on this side the fire was making up the swale diagonally toward my neighbor's fence. I had seen this sort of thing before, and my heart began to beat rather vigorously as I took a glance at the situation.

The field for immediate operations was not large, and the time of special anxiety—for me—was not likely to continue long. Sheets of hot flame shot into the air, and the wind seemed to increase. On the side upon which I stood the amount of dry annual growth was not considerable. Next came the rose brake, gradually giving way, further up the swale, to a line of spice bushes and other shrubs, and beyond was the small swamp proper, full of tall dried weeds and grass, into which the fire was rapidly eating its way. Beyond that rose the grass-covered slope with the ghosts of goldenrod and asters and iron weed, stretching up to the wood which masks the ledge, and diagonally nearly to the cottage, which was not so far away as the wood, a bare hundred yards or less from the foot of the slope.

I do not know how it may be with others, but I am free to confess that when I come into conflict with the elements thus, I do not feel myself a star of the first magnitude. I can hardly imagine a crevice so small that I could not slip into it. Whether the hole were round or square, I fear that this peg would rattle.

Among the high weeds of the marsh it was clear that I could do nothing: the fight, for what it might be worth, must be made near the foot of the slope, where the grass was thin and short. Making a detour and crossing to the other side, where I cut a bushy savin to serve for a besom—I hoped of salvation, not of destruction—I waited for a moment and watched. But the vision of the spreading flame and the thought of the cottage, of the wood, of the country beyond the ledge, was too much, and I sprang forward to contest the field at a point where there seemed a possibility, at least, of using the "flying wedge" to effect, and breaking the line of the advancing foe in the middle. But it was a useless effort. The smoke filled my eyes, and my threshing among the high weeds seemed but to add fury to the flames.

I retreated to the foot of the hillside. I had hitherto been alone: now, as I glanced up, I saw a gaunt laborer from the neighboring farm looking down doubtfully upon the scene from the farther bank. I shouted to him that

the fire had escaped from my control, and asked him to look out for the line that was threatening the fence and the adjoining property up the swale, while I watched the advance upon the hillside.

I did not have long to wait. In another moment the vanguard of the fiery host had reached the edge of the slope and begun to run among the short grass. Here was my chance, if I had one. I laid about me with my savin with a right good will, but at first apparently with no effect. The wind freshened, the smoke was driven in my face, the flames were spreading to the right and to the left. I looked at the cottage, and at the wood along the ledge, my beautiful "Hanger." The fire was hot, but it were as though cold chills ran along my spine as I realized how short the distance was 'twixt me and them, and how fast the flames were spreading. "I need you over here," I shouted; "we've got to fight for the house and wood." The rustic was not naturally over-quick in his motions, but soon I found him on the line of approach to the cottage, also savin in hand, and laying about him with more skill than I, for he had had more experience in this kind of work.

As the edge of the fire spread up the hillside, though its progress was rapid it found comparatively little material, and the body of

flame and smoke was greatly reduced. This was much in our favor, and before long gaps appeared in the advancing line. It was none too soon. A little higher up the combustible material was much more considerable. Cheered by this success we redoubled our efforts, and it soon became evident that we were mastering the situation in this quarter. Occasionally a tongue of flame would spring up upon ground over which we had passed, but a swish of the red cedar brought it quickly to naught. Though the time seemed long, I suppose really it was but a few moments after the attack began at this point before we could feel assured that we had been wholly successful.

We now turned our attention to the north branch. The fire had there been advancing slowly among the bushes, not having sufficient volume to attack these successfully, and only feeding upon the clusters of weeds among them. Now and then it would find a rich mouthful, and it was making a brilliant show in swallowing one of these, and a mighty crackling, when I attacked it; but I retired from the conflict, alas! not victor but vanquished.

However, this morsel digested, the devouring element found less food to batten upon, and as it spread here and there I fought it in detail, and to my immense relief it was not

long before the last curling tongue of flame was extinguished.

The whole affair continued, I suppose, but little more than half an hour, and probably not more than an acre of ground was covered, but my blood was coursing freely while it lasted, and I was richer in experience when it was over.

And it was only since I have been writing that I perceived an unusual fragrance of singed hair, and detected an unfamiliar crinkle in the end of my mustache.

I may remark that most of the weeds which I sought to destroy are still standing.

## XXXIX

## MADEMOISELLE PRÉFÈRE ET MADEMOISELLE JEANNE

(With humble apologies to Anatole France.)

The following brief correspondence will explain itself:

Nov. 20, 1895.

À Mademoiselle
Mademoiselle Préfère

Will ze ladies do ze scribe ze grate plezaire for to eat une volaille chez lui, on ze dimanche?

M——, he say he find yet one ver' long leg hen-roostair in ze pen.

Votre très humble serviteur
S. B.

Most Honored Monsieur
Member of the Institute

It was necessary for me to consult the tableau d'honneur before I could accept your esteemed invitation, for my young pupil or myself. Everything in my establishment is carried on with the most sensitive regard to

justice and fidelity. What was my joy, however, to find her name enrolled high upon the list!

We shall both attend your little dinner on the coming Sunday with satisfaction, with pleasure I may say,—indeed with more pleasure than it would be becoming for me to express.

Yours, my dear sir
Altogether devotedly
Virginie Préfère.

November twenty-second.

And so they came, Mademoiselle Préfère probably in blue as was her wont, with her pelerine very much in evidence, and Jeanne "wrapped up in her cloak, with her hat tilted back on her head, and her feather fluttering in the wind, like a schooner in full rig!" And the dinner passed off beautifully, old Thérèse doing her part with her usual fidelity, whether she liked it or not. The chicken was done to a turn, and was as tender as a thought, notwithstanding the faint praise with which it had been heralded, and the vegetables—well they were grown at Underledge, which should be a sufficient guarantee of their excellence. The Brown Betty was as good as ever appeared on the Quais Malaquais, and the wine of the country which accompanied it did no despite to the grapes from which it was

pressed. If Jeanne was disappointed at the absence of jelly, let us draw the veil of a modest reserve over that maidenly weakness.

And then, when we had at length adjourned to the City of Books, Mademoiselle Virginie ensconced herself in her usual corner with a tender sigh of comfort which expressed additional volumes, and I must say that she conducted herself thereafter with such discretion and self-control, as to cause me much to marvel, and to feel assured that some great revolution must have occurred in the Rue Demours. Even Jeanne was affected, insomuch that, laughable as it seems now that the day is over, and the library is tenanted only by Hannibal and myself, she cuddled herself down upon the floor in front of the open fire and laid her silly little head upon the madame's knee, while Hannibal himself, alias Kittiwink, was beguilded into some faint demonstration of confidence, a circumstance to which I should now hesitate to allude near the feline ear.

And I—there is no fool like an old fool,—I, yielding at length to the urgent solicitations of Mademoiselle, after an appropriate show of reluctance carried not too far, consented to read passages from my monograph recently crowned by the Institute, on the "Poems *inédite* attributed to the late Captain Kidd, with critical suggestions exoteric and esoteric."

When she found that she had persuaded me, she beamed all over like a snowdrift under the moonlight; and so, letting her fancy-work fall into her lap and settling back in her easy-chair with her hands clasped fondly over her pelerine, and her eyes ecstatically fixed upon the gray plaster above her, she drank in the words of wisdom which flowed from my lips.

"You will observe," I read, "with what a delicate intuition this bold mariner,

> " . . . the mildest manner'd man
> That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat '

enters into the inmost feeling of each of his captives as they walk the plank. To begin with, the scene is pictured most graphically, and with the pencil of a finished artist. The two vessels lie side by side, gently swaying, and gravely courtesying to each other in the undulating roll of the summer sea; the great sun nears the western horizon, surrounding itself with a gauze of golden haze as it slowly sinks to rest, tarrying as it were, that it may bestow a parting benediction upon the imposing ceremony: over the side of the captured craft extends the narrow bridge, securely fastened, that it may not embarrass the steps of the advancing company, but softly falling and rising with the rolling of the ship as though pointing for each, first to the path, then to the goal. All these things are indicated

to the mind and almost to the eye of the reader by a line here and a line there, placed so unerringly that the consummate art appears in the very fact of its utter disappearance.

"And then one by one, each in his turn, the neophytes advance, and as they do so the poet accompanies each, and becomes the sympathetic mouthpiece of his inmost thought. I cannot conceive of a closer appreciation of a varied individual feeling than is here shown, and it irks me to think that at times there may have been those that did not wholly realize the noble manner in which they and their musings would be immortalized."

I went on to give some special instances of the nature described, reading poems in illustration of my theme. Then incidentally I added:

"It gives me pleasure to restore to the canon and to its proper place a gem which found its way into print many years ago and since that time has floated around without an owner. My readers are certainly all familiar with it; it is one of the poems which now belong to the world at large:

> "'Fee, faw, foh, fum,
> I smell the blood of an Englishman;
> Dead or alive I will have some.'

In a happy moment of inspiration its authorship came to me, and now that it is restored to

its proper place, and carefully examined and compared with those which accompany it, the internal evidence will, I am sure, be sufficient to convince every intelligent critic of the justice of my attribution of it to our gifted author. And as Frenchmen we should take pride in noting a certain Gallic color in the underlying idea, and in the expansive force of its expression. In fact, this leads me to suggest the theory of a possible intermixture of the blood of *la patrie, la belle France,* in the veins of the *insouciant* poet at some remote epoch. Indeed his name suggests this. It seems evident that the second 'd' in the name as we now have it, is an instance of the common practice of doubling the final consonant. The remaining 'd' was probably a palatal softening of the original 't.' We thus reach 'Kit,' which was probably the form which the name first took in England, being a haphazard translation of the French form, *Chaton.* Unquestionably the proper name of our poet's family was Chaton, and it came from the town of Tarascon.

"Monsieur Chaton, with a modesty familiar in all great writers, permitted few of his poems to see the light, and it is only by the merest chance, following upon the most careful research, that I have been able to rescue from oblivion the priceless treasure which I now place before you. One poem, however,

in spite of all his care became generally known many years ago. The principle is sound that 'Love will find a way,' and 'Murder will out,' and the best things refuse to be forever 'cabined, cribbed, confined.' In it there appears conclusive evidence of his commanding philosophic perception, and poetic insight. Who can fail to see in the simple phrase

"'My name was Captain Kidd
When I sailed!'

the luminous thought of the poetic idealist?

"It has always seemed to me that English William, in the assumed catholicity of his much-quoted

"'That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet,'

was in fact controlled by a curious insular prejudice. But, while saying this, candor compels me to add that I am satisfied that William was not wholly devoid of poetic feeling. If he could not aspire to genius, I think that we must nevertheless concede to him a certain degree of talent. It is true that he was a most daring plagiarist—that he habitually took things wherever he found them, but in this he anticipated to some extent even my own hero, and so gave the strongest evidence of elevation above the common herd. And it cannot be denied that the manner in

which he concealed these appropriations, by glosses and otherwise, was skillful to a degree. In the passage under consideration he betrays his native narrowness. In that which I have cited from the later poet, on the contrary, we find a breadth of view which is in keeping with the magnificence of the vasty deep, and the grand sweep of the mighty winds with which the poet was familiar. With a vision which we cannot estimate at too high a value, he perceived that not only were certain names appropriate to certain individuals, but that they must be in harmony with certain times, places, and occurrences, and so he nobly says:

"'My name was Captain Kidd
When I sailed!'"

My enthusiasm rose as I progressed in my reading, and I ended with a triumphant peal under which the sensitive Virginie quivered. This irrepressible movement and tribute to my irresistible eloquence dislodged a spool of silk, which fell to the floor, followed by Kittiwink, who pounced upon it and turned a double somerset on the rug. This in turn awakened Jeanne, who doubtless had imagined that unconscious cerebration was the only appropriate and effective method of considering lucubrations which had been crowned by the Academy, and she immediately began to dig at her eyes with both fists, awakening the decided

disapproval of the correct Mademoiselle Préfère.

"My child," said she, "how shocking! You should not do so: what will the eminent Monsieur Sylvestre think of such a gesture?"

I protested that I was incapable of thought, and I imagined that at the same moment I perceived just a faint twitching of that eye of Jeanne which was farther removed from her preceptress. But just then the clock struck, and sounded the hour for a return to the Rue Demours.

## XL

# THE PASSING OF THE PUMP

IN an exceedingly interesting monograph upon "The Physical Geography of Southern New England," Professor William Morris Davis of Harvard sketches the probable order of the later events through which this valley and these hills have obtained their present form. He shows how the contour of the surface and other indications point to the existence all over this region at no distant time in the past, say within a few hundred thousand years, of a great table-land, surmounted here and there by scattered peaks, which table-land had been formed in earlier times by denudation—the wearing down of considerable eminences, and the filling up of deep valleys. He tells us that this plain, thus gradually worn down nearly to the level of the sea, must have been subsequently elevated to the height of or higher than the present hills, with a dip to the southward and eastward toward the Atlantic, whereupon began a new series of excavations, which laid open the present lowlands, and dug out the

beds of the watercourses, leaving the long and, upon the average, nearly horizontal lines of the hills as representatives, though themselves already much degraded, of the former sloping upland. It was long anterior to this that the enormous streams of lava were poured out over the beds of red sandstone, low beetling crags from which form the ledge which now dominates the cottage at Underledge, from fragments of which, as if in bravado, the cottage itself has been constructed; and it was at a later date that these masses became as they are now, tip-tilted, not as the petal of a flower, but as something of a much sterner sort.

Must I think of myself as a sort of Salamander, thus living within a burnt-out lava cell, or am I to be reminded rather of Samson's experience with the carcass of the lion?—"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Under the uncertainty let us put the best face upon the matter, and hardily claim the benefit of the doubt.

Where was the prodigious volcano from which flowed these great streams of molten lava? I fear that we may never discover the crater. Pleasant it is indeed to live serenely upon the edge of the upland, with no violent perturbations of the solid earth to molest or make afraid, yet methinks that I should now

have some added enjoyment if, posted upon a secure height, I could once in the far-off time have looked down upon the awful boiling of that mighty caldron, and in the darkness of the night could have watched its fiery streams spreading over this now peaceful land. It is something to be able to picture it in thought, and I fear that I shall have to content myself with that. To be sure, recorded history is not without its suggestions as to strange internal disturbances at no great distance from this spot. They may not have had anything to do with that extinct volcano, but we must remember Mark Twain's very pertinent and triumphant query upon a certain occasion, "If this is not the tomb of Adam, whose tomb is it?"

Now the town of East Haddam is some twenty-five miles southeast of this point. Dr. Trumbull, in his "History of Connecticut," says: "The Indian name of the town was Machemoodus, which in English, is *the place of noises;* a name given with the utmost propriety to the place. The accounts given of the noises and quakings there, are very remarkable. Were it not that the people are accustomed to them, they would occasion great alarm. The Rev. Mr. Hosmer, in a letter to Mr. Prince of Boston, written August 13th, 1729, gives this account of them: 'As to the earthquakes, I have something considerable

and awful to tell you. Earthquakes have been here, (and no where but in this precinct, as can be discerned; that is, they seem to have their centre rise and origin among us,) as has been observed for more than thirty years. I have been informed that in this place, before the English Settlements, there were great numbers of Indian inhabitants, and that it was a place of extraordinary *Indian Pawaws,* or, in short, where the Indians drove a prodigious trade at worshipping the devil. Also I was informed, that many years past, an old Indian was asked, What was the reason of the noises in this place? To which he replied, that the Indian God was very angry because Englishmen's God was come here.

"'Now whether there be anything diabolical in these things I know not; but this I know, that *God Almighty* is to be seen and trembled at, in what has been often heard among us. Whether it be fire or air distressed in the subterraneous caverns of the earth, cannot be known; for there is no eruption, no explosion perceptible, but by sounds and tremors, which sometimes are very fearful and dreadful. I have myself heard eight or ten sounds successively, and imitating small arms, in the space of five minutes. I have, I suppose, heard several hundreds of them within twenty years; some more, some less terrible. Sometimes we have heard them almost every day, and great

numbers of them in the space of a year. Oftentimes I have observed them to be coming down from the north, imitating slow thunder, until the sound came near or right under, and then there seemed to be a breaking like the noise of a cannon shot, or severe thunder, which shakes the houses, and all that is in them. They have in a manner ceased, since the great earthquake. As I remember there have been but two heard since that time, and those but moderate.'

"A worthy gentleman about six years since gave the following account of them. 'The awful noises of which Mr. Hosmer gave an account, in his historical minutes; and concerning which you desire further information, continue to the present time. The effects they produce, are various as the intermediate degrees, between the roar of a cannon, and the noise of a pistol. The concussions of the earth, made at the same time, are as much diversified as the sounds in the air. The shock they give to a dwelling house, is the same as the falling of logs on the floor. The smaller shocks produced no emotions of terror or fear in the minds of the inhabitants. They are spoken of as usual occurrences, and are called Moodus noises. But when they are so violent as to be felt in the adjacent towns, they are called earthquakes. During my residence here, which has been almost thirty-six years, I

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

and shocks have been less frequent than before; though not a year passeth over us, but some of them are perceptible.' "

The town of Derby is about thirty miles southwest of us. The following letter appeared in the *Connecticut Gazette* (I quote from John Warner Barber's "Connecticut Historical Collections"):

"Derby, Feb. 18th, 1764.

"On the evening of the seventh of this instant, Feb. 1764, there was a violent storm of hail and rain; the next morning after was observed a large breach in a hill on the west side of the old river, supposed to be occasioned by some subterranean wind or fire; the breach is about twenty feet deep, though much caved in, in length one hundred and thirteen feet; about sixty rods of land are covered with the gravel and sand cast out of the cavity, some of which was carried two hundred and fifty nine feet to the brink of the river; four trees of about a foot in diameter, were carried one hundred and seventy three feet distance, and 'tis supposed by their situation that they must have been forced up forty feet high; some small stones about the bigness of walnuts, were carried with such velocity that they stuck fast in a green tree that stood near the cavity; a large dry log better than two feet diameter was carried up

so far in the air, that by the force of the fall one end of it stuck so fast in the ground that it kept the other end up. The narrowest part of the breach is about thirty feet at the surface of the ground, and the bottom of the breach is crooking, winding much like the streaks of lightning.

"The above account was taken by exact rule by us,

SILAS BALDWIN,
NEHEMIAH FISHER,
DAVID WOOSTER."

To this a note is appended from "Webster on Pestilence," "A light was seen on the spot in the evening before the explosion. It was accompanied with a loud report, and some fossil substances were ejected, which were analyzed by Dr. Munson of New Haven, and found to contain arsenic and sulphur."

By the way, this book of "Collections" is an invaluable storehouse of interesting items. Moodus was not the only place where reports as of small arms were heard, and in other instances these reports seem to have been more useful. Take the following from Simsbury. (Simsbury is about ten miles north of us): "In the commencement of Philip's war in New England, in 1675, this town [Simsbury] was burnt by the Indians. Connected with which event, current tradition has preserved

and handed down the following singular and extraordinary fact: that, very shortly before the attack by the Indians, early one Sunday morning, as Lieut. Robe's father was walking over the plain not far from his house, he very plainly and distinctly heard the report of a small arm, which much surprised him, it being the Sabbath. He found, on returning to his house, that his family also heard it. On going to meeting, at which the inhabitants from all parts of the town were assembled, it was ascertained that the report was heard at the same hour in every quarter. It was, on further examination, found to have been heard as far south as Saybrook, (fifty miles,) and as far north as Northfield, at that time the extent of the English settlements to the north. The report of this gun alarmed all Connecticut. The Governor summoned a council of war to meet at Hartford; and the council issued an order for the inhabitants of Simsbury, one and all, to withdraw themselves to Hartford, the then capital."

And this from Killingly, on the eastern border of the State. In this case, the boys of to-day would be disposed to call the warning "too previous":

"The Autumn before the American Revolution, the people of this town, who had long been expecting hostilities to commence, were one day alarmed by what they took to be the

continued discharge of cannon and small arms to the N. E. in the direction of Boston. The noise continued all day and night with scarcely any intermission. The sounds heard, it is said, exactly resembled those of musketry and field pieces. First would be heard a loud report and then smaller ones, 'Slam bang, slam bang,' to use the language of those who relate the circumstance. The impression that the British were coming was so strong that most of the inhabitants mustered in a body to await orders for marching to Boston. In a few days however, contrary to expectation, they learned that no battle had taken place, and that no discharge of cannon or small arms had been made between this town and Boston. Whether the sounds proceeded from the explosion of meteors or not, we are unable to say; but the persons who heard them considered them as forerunners of the war, which actually began six months from that time."

A demonstration of a different character, and at a somewhat later day, is reported from Salisbury, near the northwest corner of the State; the circumstances were related by Mr. Sage and his family:

"These occurrences commenced Nov. 8th, 1802, at a clothier's shop; a man and two boys were in the shop; the boys had retired to rest, it being between 10 and 11 o'clock at

night. A block of wood was thrown through the window; after that, pieces of hard mortar, till the man and boys became alarmed and went to the house to call Mr. Sage, who arose from bed and went to the shop, and could hear the glass break often but could not discover from whence it came, notwithstanding the night was very light. He exerted himself to discover the cause, but without success. It continued constantly till daylight, and then ceased until the next evening at eight o'clock, when it commenced again, and continued till midnight; then ceased till the next evening at dusk, and continued till some time in the evening, and then ceased. The next day it commenced about an hour before sundown and continued about an hour, and then it left the shop and began at the dwelling house of Mr. Ebenezer Landon, 100 rods north, in the town of Sheffield. It continued several hours, and ceased till next morning: when the family were at breakfast it began again, and continued two or three hours, and ceased till evening, when it began again and continued several hours, and ceased till the next morning, when it began again and continued all the forenoon, and then ceased all together. The articles thrown into the shop were pieces of wood, charcoal, stone, but principally pieces of hard mortar, such as could not be found in the neighborhood.

Nothing but stones were thrown into the house of Mr. Landon, the first of which were thrown into the door. There were 38 panes of glass broken out of the shop, and 18 out of the dwelling house: in two or three instances persons were hit by the things that were thrown. What was remarkable, nothing could be seen coming till the glass broke, and whatever passed through, fell directly down on the window sill, as if it had been put through with a person's fingers, and many pieces of mortar and coal were thrown through the same hole in the glass in succession. Many hundreds of people assembled to witness the scene, among whom were clergymen and other gentlemen, but none were able to detect the source of the mischief."

There seems to me to have been some lack of dignity in this performance, and, moreover, it does not relate itself to important events. I like better the occasional aërial displays, even though they carry us still further away from the volcano of which we are in search. As for example, in Killingly again, Mr. Nell Alexander is represented as saying: "In the American Revolution, just before the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, I was returning from a visit to Providence, R. I. I had arrived in Killingly, and was within four miles of my residence at Alexander's Lake. It was

a bright and clear night, without any moon. I think it was half past ten when I accidentally looked up and saw a most brilliant sight. A very little south of the zenith, extending east and west in the sky, lay an arch composed of mounted cannon, with their muzzles pointed toward the south. Their color was that of the Aurora Borealis. I viewed them a long while and attempted to number them, but being in a wood, I was unable to discern those which lay near the horizon. I then hurried on to overtake a friend whose attention I wished to direct to the phenomenon. My horse being fatigued however, I did not reach him till the remarkable sight had disappeared. I related the event to every person I saw for a long period afterwards, but could find no one who had seen it besides myself, until I happened one day to be on a visit to my uncle, Mr. Levens, who is no longer living. In the course of conversation, without knowing that I had seen it, he related precisely the same circumstances which I have just related myself. He was in Killingly at the time, and but a few miles from the place where I was. He informed me that he took the trouble of counting the cannon, and as he was in a convenient situation for the purpose, he doubted not that he had numbered them all. The whole number was 64. They were removed at a small

distance from each other, well mounted and in a regular line."

This was evidently a case that ran in the family. But my favorite is the following, from a letter from the Rev. James Pierpont, quoted in Mather's "Magnalia." In 1647 times were hard in the New Haven colony, and a large number became completely discouraged, and determined to go home. Having fitted out a small vessel, they succeeded in extricating her from the ice, and sailed for England.

"In June next ensuing, a great thunder storm arose out of the north west; after which (the hemisphere being serene) about an hour before sunset, a ship of like dimensions with the aforesaid, with her canvass and colours abroad, (though the wind northernly,) appeared in the air coming up from our harbour's mouth, which lyes southward from the town, seemingly with her sails filled with a fresh gale, holding her course north, and continuing under observation, sailing against the wind for the space of half an hour.

"Many were drawn to behold this great work of God; yea, the very children cryed out—*There's a brave ship!* At length, crowding up as far as there is usually water sufficient for such a vessel, and so near some of the spectators, as that they imagined a man might hurl a stone on board her, her main-

top seemed to be blown off, but left hanging in the shrouds; then her missen-top; then all her masting seemed blown away by the board: quickly after the hulk brought into a careen, she overset, and so vanished into a smoaky cloud, which in some time dissipated, leaving, as everywhere else, a clear sky. The admiring spectators could distinguish the several colours of each part, the principal rigging, and such proportions as caused not only the generality of persons to say, *This was the mould of their ship, and this was her tragick end:* but Mr. Davenport also in publick declared to this effect: *That God had condescended for the quieting of their afflicted spirits, this extraordinary account of his sovereign disposal of those for whom so many fervent prayers were made continually.*" Was not this the Flying Dutchman, however?

But we have traveled far away: let us return to Underledge; for even here there has been a hint of nature's hidden forces, and that within recent times, for I remember that but a few months ago, at the beginning of September, 1895, I awoke from deep sleep in the dead of the night at the tiniest touch of that unmistakable tremor which marks the shuddering of the earth.

Perhaps, if I had known something more of the history of the hillside, I might still have

bored the well, and perhaps also I might not. I believe that the elder or the younger Weller says somewhere that "the merit of this observation lies in the application of it," or words to that effect, but this is not always strictly so. The observation might be first-rate, but the application of it very bad indeed.

However this may be, I was about as ignorant as my neighbors, and so it came to pass, as I have related elsewhere, that the engine was set up, and the drill was let down, and began tap, tap, tap-ing, in the modern and prosaic form of the inquiry whether Undine is at home. And so it continued hammering through the "hard-pan" of compact, sandy clay, incomplete or over-ripe rock, for a week or two, until we had reached a depth of seventy-eight feet. Then a little coarser sand was reported, and a rising of water in the tube to the height of thirty or forty feet. And I called *quits!* and the pump was duly inserted.

It was a good pump, a very good pump, and it did the best it could. To be sure, it was not the easiest thing in the world working a pump rod sixty-five feet long, but then it might have been worse. And the water had a sort of sanguinary aspect, but that grew better, much better. And after a while it reached a point where, after it had stood long enough to settle, we ventured to drink it,

and I can honestly say that I have tasted worse.

Then came one memorable Sunday! I pumped for a while in the morning, and I said, "Ah—this is something like! The water is clearing up nicely!" And I pumped a little while in the afternoon; and after two or three strokes, and before any water had reached the spout, I noticed a sort of sluggishness, an unwonted reluctance upon the part of the machinery which rapidly increased, and, after a few more strokes, only by throwing my whole mighty weight upon the pump-handle could I gradually bring it down, whereupon it incontinently began to rise of itself. That was in the month of April, and never again did the unlucky pump bring a drop of water to the surface. Its bucket was held in the grasp of a quicksand, which was worse than Gilliatt's devil-fish, for the body of the monster lay safely stowed away far beneath the ponderous hill.

And then we had our experiences, some of which I have already detailed. For a time, snow freshly gathered and melted provided a luxurious tipple, and then, as the season advanced, I discovered and developed fine springs in the talus of the cliff, which furnished us a bountiful supply of the purest crystal water. Meanwhile the accumulation of rain water in the cistern satisfied the im-

perative demands of the general circulatory system of the cottage. These were halcyon times. But ere the Spring had fairly surrendered to Summer, my last magnificent fountain under the cliff, which had at first been good for a hundred barrels a day, dwindled more and more, until at the end its basin was as dry as a withered heart. So I was forced for culinary purposes, and for the table, to rely upon my neighbor's distant well, while ever and anon long periods of comparative drought caused heaven's fresh supply to run so extremely low in the cistern as to make me feel grateful when we were vouchsafed a heavy dew.

Thus passed the early Summer months. Ere Autumn came an adequate replenishment for ordinary purposes, but Autumn had come and gone, and still Aquarius daily crossed the mountain meadow with that which was intended for finer uses. Thus it was that I was led to enter upon the supreme experiment, the beginning of which,—was it not duly recorded in "Lamb's Tales"?

The time has now arrived to tell the sequel. The labor upon which I had entered proved to be more considerable than I had planned, and it was executed under adverse circumstances. We had heavy rains, and then we had a sharp fall in temperature and severe freezing. The digging was much

more considerable than I had bargained for, and was disagreeable enough to suit any taste; and, to make it doubly interesting, at some points we reached quicksand, probably a part of the same deposit which we had discovered at a much greater depth upon the hill. At length, however, the conductors were laid to the catch basin, with laterals here and there, the drive pipe was laid to the ram, the waste pipes were laid from each of these, the service pipe was carried to the cottage, and the several trenches were filled as best they could be with great, hard, frozen chunks of earth, for the thawing of which we could not wait. And now we were ready for the installation.

It was off with the old love and on with the new. With proper ceremonies the useless pump was drawn from the well.

> "Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,
> As his corse to the rampart we hurried,"

but it was a scene which was not unaccompanied by sad reflections. As I watched the process I had a feeling—

> "A feeling of sadness and longing
> That is not akin to pain,
> And resembles sorrow only
> As the mist resembles the rain."

But it does not answer to surrender ourselves to feelings such as these; and turning

from the old to the new, we watched with more than equal interest the setting of the ram in its place and the connection of the pipes.

The critical moment has arrived; the valve is pushed down, the water splashes out upon either side, but is immediately shut off by the rising of the valve into its seat; at the shock it falls again, and then tap, tap, tap it goes, and the current is set in motion up the long pipe and to the waiting tank in the attic.

I cannot at this present season comfortably lie on my back in the pasture and hear the music, for the snow is too damp, but when the night is calm and all other sounds cease, I can stand on the veranda and listen to the tap as the little fellow beats with his—foot, shall I say?—one hundred and fifteen times a minute, day in and day out. Or I can stop at the foot of the ladder which leads to the upper regions, as I frequently do, and listen to the petty stream as it falls into the receptacle prepared for it.

And in conclusion, I am happy to reflect that some things can be done as well as others, and even, at times, a great deal better.

## XLI

## THE GUEST BOOK

HAVE you ever learned what interest there is in a record of those who come within your gates from month to month throughout the year? I do not mean of the butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker, or even of the plumber, for these, though interesting, like the poor are always with us, and they are a trifle monotonous. Nor do I mean merely of those who come "to stay"; who break bread with you, and partake of your salt, and try the virtues of your soporific air. But, while including these, I mean also those who from love, or friendship, or courtesy, or public interest, or curiosity, or whatever motive, seek you out, and give you the pleasure of extending a welcome, the right hand of fellowship, and the freedom of the country.

The freedom of the country, not of the city. Paradoxical as it may seem, I know that there may be, that there *are,* homes in the city, homes that are even actual homes, where people have a real family life, and occupations which they enjoy, and in which their friends

are sometimes allowed to participate. A day or two ago my heart quite warmed over a paragraph in my daily paper, in which a New York lady detailed the experiences of her first visit to Brooklyn during the daytime, and the refreshing recollections of early youth brought to her mind by seeing an occasional dwelling house which showed life through the windows, a woman or a girl, or two or three, sewing or reading, and appearing to be actually *at home,*—and plants growing, which did not seem merely for show, and other indications that the world was still young. Yes, there are homes even now in the city, although I have walked for miles and miles along the streets and seen no signs of them, but simply houses. And a Guest Book might be sometimes kept in such homes and have its interest, as well as in the country.

But it is in the country that you will find the real home. And when people go thither, they go purposely. Doubtless it is often merely curiosity which impels them, but there is nothing criminal in curiosity, quite the contrary. The civilized world would be a very different world indeed and a very inferior world, had it not been for the discoveries made and the changes effected in consequence of the exercise of curiosity. Pandora may have been a very restless creature, and I have no doubt that she managed to bring us into a peck of

trouble, but who wouldn't have opened the box? And what a monotonous time we should have had if it had been kept hermetically sealed! But this would have been impossible: I am sure that some cracksman would have reached the inside of it erelong, even if the little jade had not lifted the cover, or given Epimetheus an opportunity to do so, whichever it was that really happened—if either did.

Some of my guests, quite naturally, do not fully understand why I want their signatures, and liken my Guest Book to a hotel register. And then I have my little jest which I get off upon every opportunity—that I should not know to whom to send the bills if I did not have the names and addresses. Isn't a recluse entitled to have his own private little joke as well as the habitué of the club? And is it just that this pet joke, after once using, should then be discarded as a thing of naught? Out upon such niggardliness! Let us be more generous with our good things. With a little combing and trimming and dressing, with a dab of rouge here and a bit of henna there, they ought to serve for many a year, like good wines growing ever riper and better with age. Only, one has to be careful, and not repeat them too often in the same presence. A new audience is essential to the entire success of a joke. I had a friend once

"—a kinder friend has no man,"

who had a way of saying "Bim" when he heard the familiar first words of the old story. That was a good plan, but we cannot always have such external support, and are therefore compelled to a certain degree of circumspection.

Nearly two weeks had elapsed after the house became a home, and it was almost the Ides of March before the Guest Book was dug out of the case in which it had been packed, and made ready for use, and it is now the twenty-fourth of the following January. As I look over the hundreds of names which have already been inscribed upon its pages, my thought goes wandering off this way and that on as many lines, and concerning as many lives, which meet and cross and spread over the home field in a network which typifies that of the great world itself.

Here upon the first page is Phollis,—but perhaps you do not know Phollis? *I* do: and at the top of the second I find Arnchen, "with Wotan and Pussy willow." Wotan is not the father of the Gods himself, but his namesake, a great big St. Bernard puppy, as big as a young ox, who does not know how to stand still, and will knock you entirely off your feet if you do not take care. And this was the first time that Pussy willow had been out that spring, and she was not old enough or strong enough to come by herself, and so had to be carried.

Then there is my enthusiastic neighbor who is sure that the right to be somewhere else is an inherent right, like that to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that it is only necessary for us to decide that it shall be so, in order that our persons and property may be carried whither we will, practically without money and without price. We and our belongings are to be delivered at any station which we may select, upon the postal principle. And afterward comes my Liberal Unionist neighbor (but I believe that I should no longer say Liberal, but merely "Unionist")—the international journalist, who tells the English all about America, and the Americans all about England, and so tends to create a common understanding.

There are two noteworthy cases among others upon the next page, and one of them leaves this comment, which, as the Englishman says, is not half-bad for an impromptu:

> "Sweet Summer, trailing garments of rich green,
> Could not add beauty to this perfect scene.
> Enwrapt in Winter's snow these hills possess
> A grand yet most pathetic loveliness.
> And he, who of all Dames loves Nature best,
> Has chosen well at Underledge to rest."

Upon the next page I find among others the name of la Signora Alba;—in what strange land may she be now abiding?—and another name which is a curious reminder of Maxi-

milian's ill-fated Mexican empire,—that of the musician of his Court. And, again, upon the next I fall upon one which recalls a vain and perilous search for that supposed Florida volcano which has so long tantalized observers from afar, and a great mishap thereupon attending; and another, that of a former United States Consul at the Piræus, who, looking off from the terrace one superb day, warmed my heart with more than classic heat by comparing the scene before him with that of the vale of Tempe.

In the collection upon the page following appears the autograph of the lady of the Manor, and that of a prodigal of an artist, home returning nevertheless full of years and of honors, and fully conscious that a candle is intended to be set upon a candlestick, and not hidden under a bushel. And among those upon the next is one subscribed to the following verse—which I subsequently met again in one of the later Autumn's harvest of books:

> " At the edge of the hedge is a hawthorn tree,
> And its blossoms are sweet as sweet can be,
> And the birds they sing there all day long,
> And this is the burden of their song:
> ' Sweet, sweet is the hawthorn tree! ' "

Two pages later is a name which carries my thought far away to Russia and to Count Tolstoi (as indeed the previous one might have done), and then there is a whole flight of

"Ancients" from far and wide, come to alight for a moment on the familiar field. And in a little while appears our genial cosmic philosopher, the author of the "Beginnings," Professor Fiske, and then at one jump as it were, we are landed at Reykjavik in Iceland, and I am reminded that if in the late summer I have Greece in view out of my front door, according to Professor Keep, in May I have had an Icelandic Valley spread before my bay window, according to Madam Magnusson. And then Yale College puts in a claim, in view of the weather-beaten ancestral home below the cottage, and soon after comes a bewildering flight of butterflies escaped from the cloister, by which my eyes are dazzled.

Here are two names, whose bearers are fresh from the faraway city—the fresher for being now far away, for one of them quotes of this present abiding place,

> "In which it is enough for me
> Not to be doing, but to be."

But I cannot pretend, as one after another I turn them over, even to select wisely from these pages with their various suggestions of individual, of time, and of place. Here upon two consecutive pages are casual visitors from Absecom, New Jersey; Tarpon Springs, Florida; Farmington, Connecticut; Toronto, Canada; New York City, Baltimore, Min-

neapolis, and Songaloo, Mississippi. Think of the spider tracks made over the land by these individuals as they went to and fro, of their casual meetings, and their partings, as of "ships that pass in the night." And what stories they bore about with them, stories of which, here and there, I have the clew. With some, the tale has been told, the dénouement reached, and they are now but marking time in that little space upon the last page which is filled with stars—thank Heaven that it *is* filled with stars!—ere a firm hand shall one day write at the foot, *Finis*. And some—how many! are only hesitating on the verge, peering curiously in between the leaves, wondering, yet unaware how the story may run, or whither it may tend. And yet others, all unconscious in many instances it may be, are in the Sturm und Drang, in the very stir and stress of the drama, day by day making their exits and their entrances as if they were living common workaday lives among their fellows.

## XLII

## OVER AND UNDER THE SNOW

IT is of no use. I have been badgering my brains and teasing the vocabulary to find some words that might indicate the beauty of the morning, but in vain. Fandy Sækel and those of his cult would, I know, try to help me; they would gladly turn inside out the whole establishment of an Artists' Colorman, and give me a sample card of all the pigments therein contained fresh and raw, in smears and chunks, but I will have none of it. Cazin, indeed, might arouse in me a thrill of response, and I can but think that if the *nouveaux* would sit humbly at his feet for a few centuries they might in the end imbibe something of his spirit and be prepared to go to Mother Nature with hopeful hearts. Even then they should stop and breathe a little prayer, or at least pulse a silent aspiration, that they might be preserved from all libel, detraction, and misrepresentation.

The snow began falling upon Tuesday afternoon, coming from the mountains in the far northwest, stealing softly across the valley,

and at last gently sifting down upon us in tiny crystals, so fine as to be scarcely perceptible, and with great spaces between: falling without haste and without rest through the windless air, hour after hour far into the dark night. Gradually it covered thinly the smooth places, and filtered between the blades of grass, and changed the country from brown to gray, and from gray to white. Then when the morning broke, the sunlight flooded the dazzling fields, and every object stood out boldly, sharp and clear.

But with the coming of another day, the clouds drifted together again, and again began the silent fall, slow but steady, like a sprinkling with fine powder until you examined it closely, and found each tiny grain to be a crystal gem. And so it continued on into the night, and on again through the next day, with the north wind gradually rising until the particles seemed to go past me horizontally, and I wondered how and where it should be that they would finally sink to rest. And soft curves and wreaths were built up around the cottage, with thin, delicate edges, which seemed to need but the breath of a mosquito to send them tumbling in a thousand imponderable fragments. Only for an hour did it come in downy, fleecy flakes, such as fill the air, and make one feel that the sky is really falling.

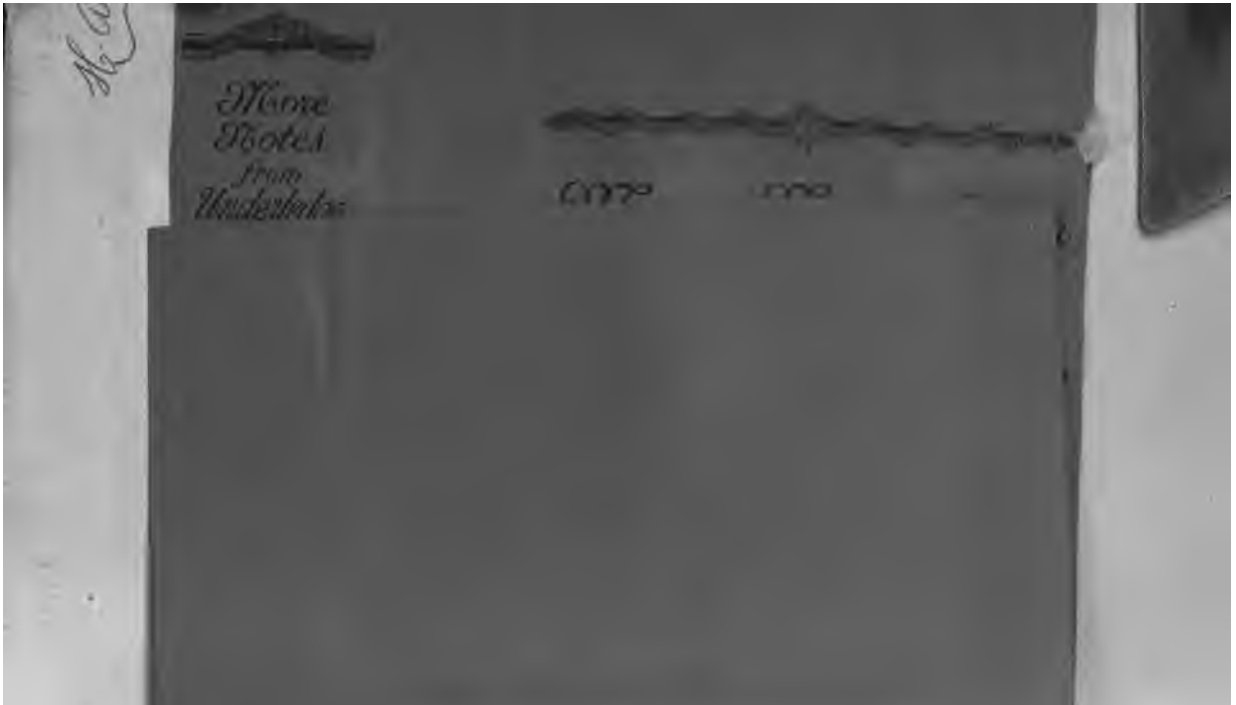
But this morning! Ah it is that of which I wish to write, but I cannot: how the sun shone out in his glory, and gilded the nearer slopes, and threw a warm glow over the scattered shrubs and trees and the great stretches of forest, and warmed up the expanse of sky, from the blue above through the softening shades of green to the vaporous and almost imperceptible clouds over the hills; and then beneath, the ethereal haze of infinitesimal ice crystals floating in the air, a diaphanous veil over the mountains and the valley, which glowed and palpitated with opalescent hues, the very sublimated essence of the mother of pearl. The blue was on the hills, but such a blue! No—let me not attempt to paint with words that which only could be felt.

And all was peace. Beneath the snow were many things: and some we had laid away in sorrow, alike beyond expression, and now and then the memory recurs with an intensity too bitter to be borne. But under the snow we know that the grass is finding safety from the strenuous cold, and that the slender root-fibers of plant and shrub and tree are groping in the soil for their bread of life: and that in the seed kernels the mysterious processes are going on quite silently which herald the coming of the stem and leaf and blossom and fruit of another year. And the soft fallen snow, like a downy blanket on a winter's night, keeps

all alike quite snug and safe; but more than that,—it brought with it from the skies, fast bound within its colorless crystals, the floating elements from the air which shall in the coming days mingle with those in the soil to vivify the slumbering germ, and bring its life to a happy consummation.

And so we lift up our eyes into the hills from whence cometh our help, and we feel that it is all a mystery, and know that we cannot understand it the least bit in the world; but looking out upon the glory which is, we surrender ourselves like little children to the good cheer which is tendered to us in such ample measure, and cannot help but dream that it is but a faint and faltering vision of the glory which shall be.

THE END


Moore
Hotel
from
Underhill